

MEMOIRS
OF A
SCOTS HEIRESS.

ADDRESSED TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LADY CATHERINE * * * * *

BY THE AUTHOR OF CONSTANCE, &c.

VOLUME III.

L O N D O N :

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MEMOIRS

OF A

SCOTS HEIRESS.

TO divert me from the reflections I indulged in, Mrs. Semhurst, in about ten days after Mr. Cyril's departure, proposed taking me to her daughter's, where, she said, I was certain of every exertion to amuse me that friendship and a large family could make. We set out, and were within a few miles of the place of our destination, when we

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stopped

stopped at a small town to get some refreshment, imagining we should be too late for Mrs. Agthorpe's dinner hour.

We had alighted from the carriage, and were in the parlour of the inn, when I heard Mrs. Semhurst enquired for, in a loud rough voice. A man, a stranger to both of us, was shewn in : he had a rustic appearance, seemed charged with some very important business ; and, rummaging his pockets, introduced his subject, by asking my friend if her name was Semhurst. When she had satisfied him in this particular, he said he had had a great deal of difficulty in finding her out, and that had not a gentleman come to his house and known the name on *the watch*, he could never have traced its owner.

All this was unintelligible. Mrs. Semhurst began to feel whether she had lost her watch ; but the mystery was soon

soon cleared up. "Pray Madam," said the man, "had you not a son, "a Mr. Cyril?" — I involuntarily answered for her—"Yes; Mrs. Semhurst has."—"Then, madam," replied the stranger, "I am sorry to tell you, the gentleman shot himself at my house a little more than a week ago. "I keep an inn within a few miles of "Canterbury: he came in in the evening very late, ordered supper, and "while it was getting, committed "the rash action.—Except a few guineas, which I have been forced to lay "out, I found nothing of value about "him but this watch, and this pocket-book: if the name of Cyril had not "been on the watch, I could never have "found him out."

All this was delivered in the most unfeeling monotony. He was proceeding to describe the dress and person of the deceased; and related the means he

had made use of to evade legal enquiry, and procure the body decent interment. Neither Mrs. Semhurft nor myself had power to interrupt him.—Every fibre of my heart relaxed. I gave full credit to all I had heard. It was but a verification of my prognosticating terrors; and this alone was wanting to render me completely wretched.

Mrs. Semhurft seemed, even to the last, extremely unwilling to give up her high opinion of Mr. Cyril's self-control. She looked at the watch: it might be one he had parted with; and in the pocket-book there was nothing decisive. The man again rummaged, and now produced a small oval shagreen case. At sight of this, her incredulity immediately vanished; and she screamed out, "O God! it is indeed my son!" I took the case from the man, eager to see what this confirmation could consist of.—I opened it, and
it

it contained a miniature of myself!—I started, shut the case, and now turned all my weeping attention to Mrs. Semhurst, who saying faintly, “I am too well convinced; for Cyril never would have parted with that picture,”—fell back in her chair as I thought dead.

I desired the man to leave the room, and to send Mrs. Semhurst’s servant to her. With this request he did not comply, till he had said he should remain in the inn till the next morning, and hoped he should have a handsome recompence for his trouble. Distracted with my own situation, and that of my friend, I promised him every satisfaction if he would but be gone.

Mrs. Semhurst’s maid came to us.—With great difficulty we got her to bed, and in a short time signs of returning life cheered us; but, alas! not of returning reason. She raved incoherent-

ly; but seemed entirely to have forgotten the cause of her affliction : her son she did not once mention : she seemed just to know me for what I was, her torment, and would not endure me in her sight.

This just cruelty afflicted me beyond bearing. I kept at a distance; and as my only resource, sent for Mr. and Mrs. Agthorpe. They came : on me devolved the dreadful office of explaining what had past. Mr. Agthorpe's reply to me was a query after the watch, which he observed, the man was not entitled to : his wife, Mr. Cyril's *own sister*, was anxious about the property at the chambers, prudently remarking, that as soon as the affair was known, every one would think they had a right to plunder ; and reminding her husband, that by a will, which had given her brother a large fortune, she was also
constituted

constituted his heir, if he died unmarried.

Such cool powers of deliberation repelled me from the possessors : they went to attend Mrs. Semhurst ; and I, unable to support the complicated burden that oppressed me, threw myself on a bed in the next chamber.

Here, without the least notice from Mr. or Mrs. Agthorpe, who had so lately professed the warmest attachment to me, and conscious only of a wretched existence, I remained a fortnight, at the end of which I saw no prospect before me, but that most welcome one, the grave. My recollection of all that had happened was perfect : the past appeared to me an immense wave of the sea, against which it was vain to struggle : it bore me before it, and was precipitating me into the abyss of the future. When exposed on the bosom

of the Atlantic, my death did not appear more certain, nor was it half so cordially welcomed. I had, as I thought, out-lived the possibility of existing. I wished only to atone for the many calamities I had brought on others ; but this was denied me, and the world had not a comfort left for me.

I learnt from a very decent stranger, whom the people of the inn had procured for me as a nurse, that my dear Mrs. Semhurst had been removed to her daughter's, with little prospect of recovery. As the last satisfaction I promised myself, I got a person sent over to make fresh enquiries after her. The answer returned was not softened by one consolatory or sympathising expression. It was written, and nearly in these words :

“ Mr.

“ Mr. and Mrs. Agthorpe present
“ compliments to Miss Hamilton.—
“ Mrs. Semhurst is still in an extremely
“ doubtful, or rather hopeless state.—
“ Mr. and Mrs. A. join in requesting
“ Miss H. so far to indulge their feel-
“ ings, as to leave the neighbourhood
“ as soon as she can, without incon-
“ venience to herself.”

Thank my cruel friends, said I;
when I had read their mandate; their
unkindness only helps to diminish my
regret at leaving such a world. Mr.
and Mrs. Agthorpe shall be duly obey-
ed, as far as is in my power. Perhaps I
cannot remove myself; but I can cease
to disturb them. In the neighbouring
church-yard, whose rustic graves I con-
template with all the longing of ex-
treme weariness, I may occupy a place
unmolested and unmolesting. A little
patience, and they will enjoy the quiet

they wish for; I, a repose ten thousand times more desirable.

I returned no answer to their billet. My thoughts were wholly fixed on the scene before me. It was not now, I fancied, in the power of any thing on earth to disturb my tranquillity; and finding my mind strengthen as my body grew weaker, I trusted that He, into whose hands I was about to resign a valueless being, would grant me a quiet and steady exit from this theatre of woe. I saw the grim welcome monarch every hour opening his arms wider to receive me; I blamed the delay of his approach; and felt disappointed whenever I awoke from my perturbed slumbers.

But how was I deluding myself! What I wished, I hoped: what I hoped, I thought certain; and when I was recovering apace, I fancied myself drawing
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ing near my end. In spite of my negligence of all means of recovery, I did recover ; and with a degree of ingratitude, not even my miseries could excuse, in another fortnight saw myself in the possession of all my faculties. At first I was angry at the callosity of my own nature, that had been able to “ bide the pitiless storm ;” but better thoughts were soon infused into me ; I submitted patiently to the prolonged being decreed me ; and saw the wisdom of resignation to what I could not oppose.

I was just able to quit my chamber, and began to think whither I should betake myself, when a path was marked out for me by the receipt of the following letter, which had been sent round from Mrs. Semhurst's to Mr. Agthorpe's, and from thence, without even common compliments, to me.

MEMOIRS OF A

“ My dear madam,

“ Perhaps, if I hope for your attention, I ought to affix no signature to this letter. My own, I am conscious, is the worst I can use to obtain it ; but it is too late to attempt disguise, and a conviction of my crimes and follies, has rendered me too serious to approve it.

“ As your husband, I dare not address you ; I plead therefore only for a wretched destitute creature, whom imprudence has reduced to misery, and who can rely only on compassion for relief.

“ The partial discovery you made to Lady Jane Alderway has completed my ruin. On my success in a measure, too nefarious to be named to you, and which would have put my life in your power, I depended even
“ for

“ for a subsistence. My character is
“ entirely blasted : my credit conse-
“ quently gone. Even for the paper
“ on which, I write I am indebted to
“ the commiseration of a fellow-suf-
“ ferer, scarcely less wretched than my-
“ self.

“ It is now three months since I be-
“ came, at the suit of a considerable
“ creditor, a prisoner in the King’s
“ Bench. The small means I had of
“ supporting myself here, with any de-
“ gree of decency, have been long ex-
“ hausted ; and I suffer all the hard-
“ ships of the vilest inhabitants of these
“ horrid walls. A violent fever has
“ left me in a state of such debility, as
“ threatens me with a speedy death,
“ unless I can procure proper nourish-
“ ment, which is entirely out of my
“ power. The prison allowance my
“ stomach nauseates ; and I cannot get
“ even a little palatable broth.

“ When

“ When I have stated these distresses,
“ I will not presume to dictate how
“ they shall be relieved. I know not that
“ you can relieve them ; but of this I
“ am satisfied, that the compassion of
“ your nature justifies my hopes.

“ I can say nothing to urge you : I
“ have no recompence to offer. My
“ estate has been long under the ma-
“ nagement of trustees ; and when it
“ will be productive, is totally uncer-
“ tain. - I cannot use such gross flattery
“ as to say, I should be happy to share it
“ with you. I have used you too ill,
“ to think of comfort with you.

“ If you hereafter chuse to consider
“ yourself as my wife, which I here ac-
“ knowledge you, I will by a thorough
“ reformation endeavour to deserve your
“ esteem. But should your heart have
“ made another election, or should you
“ wish our nominal union dissolved, I
“ will

“ will not oppose a divorce ; which,
“ considering the circumstances of our
“ marriage, and my immediate deser-
“ tion of you, might, I am told, be ob-
“ tained.

“ I trust you have no pride that can
“ be offended by this offer ; but, per-
“ haps, it is necessary I should explain
“ my meaning. Briefly then, I would
“ give the world I had not married you ;
“ for there is an angel of a woman,
“ whose credulity I have betrayed, who
“ has every claim of a wife on me,
“ except the legal one, and whose lisping
“ infants stab me with the name of fa-
“ ther. To her my heart returns from
“ every wandering : in her my every
“ wish, but that of doing you justice,
“ is centered. She, dear girl, is igno-
“ rant of my situation : she is, perhaps,
“ for she depends solely on me, in equal
“ want with myself. O, Lady Lin-
“ field ! if your hatred for me is not
“ capacious

“capacious enough to include even
“those who are connected with me
“by injury, do afford some relief to the
“woman I have treated still more cruel-
“ly than yourself. If one of us must pe-
“rish for want, let it be me. Do, if you
“have the means, let some one enquire
“after the health of Mrs. Smith, South
“Molton-street.

“I am aware I have written what is
“highly improper, and can only apo-
“logize for it, by subscribing myself

“Your almost distracted,

“But obedient servant.

“LUSON LINFIELD.”

“Miss HAMILTON.”

Perhaps my own forlorn situation, at
this moment, made me more susceptible
of pity for the miseries this letter de-
scribed. All it urged, I felt in full
force. As I proceeded in reading it,
the

the resentment a glance at the signature had excited, gave way to more tender sentiments ; and when I had concluded it, such is the power of words, I was so far from retaining the least ill-will towards its writer, that I saw him only in the light of a fellow-sufferer with myself, and one whom my follies had contributed to ruin. I sincerely commiserated his poverty and captivity, and instantly resolved to afford him whatever relief was within the small scope of my abilities.

But there was a part of his letter which, while it raised my opinion of him, drew my attention to another object. The words, "*If one of us must perish, let it be me,*" seemed to cancel the error they referred to : they called loudly on humanity to extend comfort equally to both parties. I was agitated by the fear that in one or other instance I might be too late. I wished I could

could divide myself. — I scarce knew whither to go first.

Unable to endure the torture of delay, I instantly ordered a chaise, discharged every debt I had contracted, and to my great comfort, found I had still remaining, out of Lady Donachmuir's benevolent remittances, thirty-four pounds; with this, I hoped I might relieve the immediate wants of those I meant to serve; and for a future provision for myself, must rely on the providence, that had hitherto wonderfully supported me.

The next day at noon I reached town, and having in my way considered how I had best act, I went to the lodgings I had occupied, when in search of employment. They were fortunately vacant, and from thence I wrote to Sir Luson, inclosing for his use a bank-note for ten pounds. I told him the true
state

state of my finances and my mind, and promised to set out instantly on the business he had recommended to me. I assured him of my friendship, if his future conduct entitled him to it; and, at the same time, freed him from all apprehension that I should ever enforce any claim on him as his wife. This consolatory epistle I dispatched by a responsible person; and then set out in a hackney-coach, for I was too weak to trust my feet, in quest of Mrs. Smith, in South Molton-street.

After a tedious enquiry, I was convinced no such person as I described lived there; but just as I was most reluctantly abandoning all hope, I learnt that she had been driven out of the house she had occupied, by an execution, and was retreated to a lodging in an obscure court in the neighbourhood. Thither I repaired; with much difficulty found her out, and with more ascended

ascended to her. I was directed in a surly manner by the people in the shop, to the uppermost room in the back part of the house. I went to the door: I knocked at it:—no answer was returned.—I knocked again:—a faint voice answered, “Come in.”—I entered. How shall I describe what I saw, so as to give you an adequate idea of the scene?

The room was small, miserably out of repair, and had no other furniture than a wretched bedstead, without tester or curtains, a crazy table, and two tottering chairs. It was October, the day very cold, but the fire-place presented only the chilling ventilation of the chimney. On the table lay a decent gown, the making of which was not quite finished. On one chair was a girl of five or six years old playing most dangerously with a pair of scissors; and on the miserable bed, which seemed composed

composed only of rags, lay the female I was in pursuit of. At her back was another little girl, about a year younger than her sister, the image of death; and in the mother's bosom was a sweet plump infant, who, regardless of the misery around it, was sucking with the utmost eagerness, and drinking to all appearance, the last maternal draught its parent could yield it. Her eyes were closed when I came up to the bed-side: she then, without opening them, faintly said—"You see my condition: it is in vain to ask me for rent. I am too ill to go on with my work; but as soon as I have done it, and am paid for it, you shall have the money."

I would have undeceived her; but I feared, that even the sound of my voice might banish her fleeting spirit for ever. I was almost overcome by what I had seen: my knees trembled, and I began to apprehend I myself should
scarcely

scarcely live to do the good I proposed. I drew the vacant chair near the bed. The girl on the other chair, who had stared in silence, now called out, "Mamma, here's a Lady." The wretched creature raised her eyelids, and seeing a stranger, attempted to lift up her head.

The tears that were bursting from my eyes, I could restrain no longer, when I discovered, through all this cloud of misery, the still beautiful features of the lady in Welbeck-street, to whom I had, but a few months before, offered myself for the post of governess to her children, and who had then treated me with such uncommon candour and generosity. Her address, I recollect, was sent me as *Mrs. Smith*; but a name so common, did not at all awaken my memory when I read Sir Luson's letter.

She had not forgotten me : I therefore

fore found it easy to introduce myself as a person not unacquainted with her situation, and well known to Sir Luson Linfield; and encouraging her by expressions of the sincere concern I felt for her sufferings, I enquired how I could best alleviate them. She, with the same humility I had before observed in her, and which distress and resignation increased, professed herself undeserving of regard, and not at all desirous of relief to herself. "If," said she, "you feel for my calamity, transfer your pity to my children, and suffer me to die in peace." Her eyes closed again, and she sunk down into her former posture.

I again named Sir Luson Linfield, as having requested me to see her. She shook her head. "Do not mention him," said she: dear as he is to me, "I cannot forgive his neglect of his children: to suffer us to be turned
" out

“out of doors without any means of
“subsistence, or a bed to lie on:—to
“take no notice of my repeated letters:
“—to leave us to starve—O, ’tis too
“cruel!”—Her voice was drowned in
a flood of tears: she sobbed violently;
and I feared would go off in convulsions.

Half crazy with the scene before me, I knew not what to do. If I left this tortured sufferer to get help for her, she might die before I could return. I looked for a bell:—no such thing. I asked the eldest child if she could go down stairs by herself. She said, “Yes.” I therefore dispatched her to fetch up the landlady; and, in the mean time, I tried to comfort my new acquaintance, by assuring her Sir Luson’s neglect was involuntary. I, by degrees, told her what was his situation. I read her that part of his letter, which expressed his attachment to her; carefully concealing my

my interest in the business, and whatever hinted at the affair with Lady Jane Alderway. The food she was dying for want of, could not have proved a more powerful restorative than these evidences of his love : she was grieved at his misfortunes ; but cheered by his kindness.

The furlly landlady, who would scarce vouchsafe to point to the stairs, when I enquired for Mrs. Smith, came up on my sending, with a less crabbed aspect, and a “ What you please to want, “ Ma’am ?” I asked, what her arrear of rent was. “ Why it amounts to— “ let me see, Ma’am ; it amounts to— “ twice six is twelve—twelve shillings, “ Ma’am—and then, Ma’am, the gentlewoman has had goods out of the “ shop, that comes to, I believe, five “ shillings more ; and it’s very hard “ on us poor people, Ma’am, that has “ nothing but what we works hard for,

VOL. III. c Ma’am,

“ Ma’am, not to be paid, Ma’am :—
“ and times you see, Ma’am, are so
“ hard, and trade’s so dead, Ma’am;
“ and taxes, Ma’am, that there’s no
“ knowing who to trust.”

There was no possibility of stopping the good woman’s tongue, but by diverting her attention to her interest. I succeeded, by promising her immediate payment of all she had demanded, on condition she would, without delay, procure for Mrs. Smith and her children such nourishment as they stood in need of, and light a comfortable fire. She cheerfully acquiesced : it was her own dinner time : she had got a very nice sweetbread (Good Heaven ! thought I, sweetbread in the shop, and starving poverty in the garret !) it was fit to go to the King’s table ; she had given half-a-crown for it, though it was not so big as the palm of her hand ; it was saved on purpose for her, because Mr. Somebody,

Somebody, Lord Something's butcher, that she always dealt with, knew she loved a sweetbread, when it was delicate.

She departed, repeating the eulogium of the delicate sweetbread, and sent her maid instantly to make a fire. I desired her to fetch a bottle of wine, and what other little matters I thought might aid my purpose; and having removed poor Mrs. Smith to a warmer situation, I checked her pathetic gratitude, enquiring about the gown on the table. She said, it was for a lodger in the house, to whom she had promised it that evening. It wanted but little of finishing. I thanked Heaven, my affliction had taught me the use of my fingers; and while the starving creature, whose stomach, had it fasted another hour, would, perhaps, have refused all nourishment, eat her temperate meal, and fed her infants, I worked for her, for-

getting in the delight I experienced, every past and future ill.

None but those who have been privileged with such an opportunity, can truly image to themselves what I felt, when I saw nature reviving in all the objects before me; when I heard the words reiterated, "You have saved our lives;" when the big round tears followed, and the mother, who alone could judge of the Providence that directed me to her, involuntarily raised her eyes and hands in speechless gratitude to Heaven. — Once again, I abhorred Sir Luson Linfield, for having betrayed such beauty and corrupted such virtue; yet he too claimed my pity.

Having staid as long as was necessary with the re-animated family, put the finishing hand to the gown and sent it away, discharged their debts, and procured what comforts their sorry habitation

tion afforded, for the night I left them, with a promise to see them in the morning, and to find a more decent lodging for them, where Mrs. Smith might carry on a business she seemed able, when in health, to get a living by. I found she knew of Sir Luson's marriage with Lady Donachmuir, but had no idea of my being that unfortunate personage. She, as was natural, when he was her only informer, imagined him the party aggrieved: I did myself so much justice as to assure her, that though Sir Luson's repentance cancelled his fault, he it was who had most cause to blush, since Lady Donachmuir's conduct was the effect of involuntary ignorance;—and then giving her my name as *Miss Hamilton*, I departed.

On returning to my solitary lodging (O what a dismal contrast between this, and my situation a few weeks before!) I found my messenger to Sir Luson had

executed his commission faithfully.—

The captive Baronet sent me a billet expressing his acknowledgments, intreating me not to straiten myself by my wish to relieve him, and hinting a desire to see me, and to hear of Mrs. Smith. The latter satisfaction I sent him early the next morning; but the former part of his request I convinced him was improper, and might impede the annulling our marriage, if at any time hereafter we could attempt it.

It was peculiarly fortunate, for the state of my mind, at this juncture, that my new duties found it full employment.—Moments of rest were hours of agony to me. Grief for Mrs. Semhurst's sad condition, and unabated love for her son's memory, were daggers that struck me to the heart, if ever I relaxed my attention to Sir Luson's and Mrs. Smith's sufferings. Natural rest I could get none, notwithstanding my

my bodily weakness, and unaccustomed fatigues. Without sleep at night, I could not exert myself in the day; and I was therefore forced to have recourse to laudanum.

The following day I had the satisfaction of placing Mrs. Smith in a decent lodging, opposite to me, where I hoped to maintain her in tolerable comfort, 'till she could do something for herself. She repeated what she had at our first accidental meeting told me of her family, but begged permission to conceal their name. Some of her relations, she said, had expressed a willingness to help her, if she would quit Sir Luson. He had now quitted her, and I hope for ever, unless he could make her his wife: she therefore had a claim on their kindness, though hitherto they had withheld it; and as soon as she was able to exert herself, she made proper application to them; but not one would stir

for her; a guinea, and a request that she would not be troublesome, was the most she obtained from any.

An interval of six weeks elapsed. Sir Luson was still in durance, and I had regularly remitted him a guinea a week. —Mrs. Smith got a little work, and grudged herself every sixpence I expended for her. I too was as frugal as I could be, and yet our various and complicated necessities had, within five guineas, exhausted my purse. It was now time to look to myself: a failure of cash was death to us all; and to procure a fresh supply, was not easy. My spirits, after the recent calamities they had borne me through, were scarcely equal to any effort for a maintenance; but some must be made; and I began, though very reluctantly, to enquire for a governess's place. Advertising I now dreaded: the influx of applications it brought me before, I in my still farther depressed

depressed state, considered as a misfortune.

In the mean time I wrote to Lady Donachmuir, communicating all that had passed ; and while I was waiting for her answer, I kept up a frequent correspondence with the penitent Sir Luson. I learnt he was in confinement at the suit of Lord Cheston, the nephew and hard-hearted heir of my honoured friend, Lady Cadwicke. The debt was two hundred pounds. The other creditors, convinced of the uselessness of keeping an insolvent in jail, would have liberated him on certain stipulations : they had offered to allow him one hundred and fifty pounds a year, on condition he would entirely make over to them his estate, then in the hands of trustees, and for ever quit the kingdom. With this offer he would gladly have closed ; but Lord Cheston held out, and declared his resolution of de-

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taining him for life, if his debt was not discharged.

You remember my naming, as a companion of our voyage to America, a gentleman of the name of Slarrow, a man, as we soon found, of dissipated manners and a broken fortune. He was of a lively turn and genteel behaviour, and very capable of amusing; an obligation, I believe, most people are disposed in a long voyage to receive with gratitude.

This gentleman had returned from America, disappointed in his last remaining hope of retrieving his affairs, by a visit to a near relation there, and his imprudences had thrown him into the King's Bench; where, meeting a social spirit in Sir Luson Linfield, they commenced a close friendship, in the course of which they obtained a perfect knowledge of each other's situation. Slar-

row

row had been bred to the law, and now offered whatever assistance this kind of knowledge enabled him to afford his fellow-prisoner, who was already indebted to him for many friendly offices; and in a great measure for the partial concurrence of his creditors in a design to release him. An application to Lord Cheston was all that was wanting to perfect this part of his plan.

I knew Lord Cheston too well, to hope any thing from his generosity; but I could not refuse, when asked, to write to him, as a person interested for Sir Luson, and desirous of availing myself of my slight acquaintance with his Lordship, to put it in his power to do an act of humanity.

In his answer to my letter, which had been forwarded to him in the country, he recognised me as the friend of his deceased aunt, and very politely begged

me to call on him at his house in town on an evening he named in the ensuing week, when he assured me, he would fully discuss the subject, and give me every satisfaction in his power. Well, said I to myself, let it be remembered, that here is one instance, in which the acquisition of wealth has meliorated a human heart.

But pleased as I was with his Lordship's reply, and willing as I was to forward Sir Luson's interests, I did not much relish the tête-à-tête I was invited to. I therefore cast about for a companion; but no one could I find fit for such a purpose. Mrs. Smith, had her interference been proper, had an insurmountable aversion to the sight of a stranger. I saw poverty and squeamishness could never make a proper league; and I was forced to dismiss all opposing scruples.

Sir Luson reckoned much on the success

cess of my application, and eagerly anticipated his prospect of freedom. Mr. Slarrow had cheered him, and indeed all of us, by proving according to the principles of law, that Sir Luson, with my consent, might marry Mrs. Smith, as if I asserted no claim, no one else had a right to molest him. She was overjoyed. Their scheme was in a great degree settled. They would retire with their children to a cheap part of France; and to this and every other proposal for their advantage, I willingly acceded.

Our prospect was still farther brightened by the generosity of my invariable friend, Lady Donachmuir, who, in reply to my state of circumstances, offered me out of her jointure of five hundred a year, one fifth, if I would, with that, seek some retired situation, independent of the whim and caprice of the world; where I might recover my health,

health, which still fluctuated, and enjoy the first of all human blessings, peace: —a blessing she wished to purchase for me; but which, alas! I could never hope for while memory existed.

Unwilling as I was to inroach so largely on her income, the offer of retirement was captivating to one, who had so long been beat about the world; and I accepted it. She hinted a wish that I would fix near her; but to this, however agreeable her society would have been, there were weighty objections. It might make a breach between her and her mother, whose conduct was such as rendered it difficult to keep any measures with her; and beside, there was, in my idea, something invidious in my chusing to reside in a place where I might be supposed watching eagerly for that improbable event, which should restore me to the honours I had been justly, though cruelly stripped of. If I thought

thought I, I live near Lady Donachmuir, it would be for the pleasure of visiting her; and supposing I chanced, as might be the case, to be left alone with the infant Earl, and any accident happened to him, what would the world not imagine? or what would Mrs. O'Tarb not say? I regretted nothing I had lost by him; I had not a wish to outlive him; but however pure my intentions, they would only be known by my actions, and I saw the prudence of avoiding censure; I therefore turned my thoughts towards the principality of Wales; and having immediately made due acknowledgments to my munificent friend, I deferred arranging my plan, only till I saw how the various events, then depending, turned out.

It had been necessary before this to entrust Mrs. Smith with my real situation; her conduct induced me to this confidence, and her fears respecting the degraded Lady Donachmuir's claim on
Sir

Sir Luson, demanded from common humanity, this cheap satisfaction. She had recovered her strength : hope animated her beauty ; and we were beginning to grow tranquil under our misfortunes, when we were a little disconcerted by the following polite epistle sent to me by the penny-post.

“ Lady Jane Alderway is informed,
“ from good authority, of the impossi-
“ tion with which Miss Hamilton, alias
“ Miss Macgilroy, but never, except
“ in her own imagination, Lady Do-
“ nachmuir, insulted her, when she in-
“ troduced herself to her protection.—
“ She likewise understands that Miss
“ H. has it in contemplation to connive
“ at Sir Luson Linfield’s marrying a
“ woman he has for some years kept.
“ Lady Jane Alderway thinks it proper
“ to give Miss H. a friendly hint, that
“ such conduct shall not pass unno-
“ ticed, and that she will not be in-
“ sulted

“sulted a second time with impunity.
“She has Sir Luson’s written promise
“of marriage; and a legal opinion in-
“forms her, that his addressing her,
“while engaged as he was, will bear an
“action, and entitle her to very heavy
“damages.”

How could Lady Jane get this intelligence? was my first query to myself:—a query not then answerable. I was thunder-struck at the contents of the malignant billet, yet could scarce refrain from laughter at the folly of the writer: but it was no laughing matter.—Though I had no faith in the legal opinion she quoted, it sufficiently evinced what was equally ruinous to us, her inveterate malice. Right or wrong, we had not a guinea to throw away in law; and a little rumination convinced us, that notwithstanding Mr. Slarrow’s positive and encouraging assurances, of which, to do him justice, he was very liberal,

liberal, we must proceed with the utmost caution, or involve ourselves in an expensive, if not a precarious litigation. In such a net of difficulties had my uncle's *concealed*, and my *boasted* wedding, entangled us!

The effect of this accident on Mrs Smith from whom, till now we had industriously concealed whatever regarded Lady Jane Alderway, was such as might be expected; and I had no way of consoling her, under so heavy a disappointment, but by promising, with all expedition, to put Lady Donachmuir's scheme in practice, and by inviting my unfortunate but amiable friend to share my retreat.

We had now but one object of negotiation to fix our attention on, and that was Sir Luson's release, in which I was in great hopes of procuring Lord Cheston's indispensable acquiescence. I was punctual to my appointment: the hour

was

was eight in the evening, the time of year nearly Christmas. I sent for a hackney-coach, and having reached my ever-regretted Lady Cadwicke's house, in Grosvenor-square, I was shewn into the drawing-room; so altered I scarce knew the place: perhaps the transformation saved me some painful and useless emotions. No one was in it. While I waited for the master of the house, I looked about for symptoms of a wife:—all appeared truly bachelor-like. I wished myself away.

His Lordship in about a quarter of an hour came to me;—more than ever the man of fashion in his appearance. I expressed my concern for having intruded on him perhaps too early. It was, I assure you, *genuine* concern, for I immediately saw he had had his *quantum* of wine; and should have been glad had I kept away till the fumes were a little evaporated. I will not say he was positively

positively intoxicated; but he was in that state, in which the spirits are elevated at the expence of reason, and gentlemen are the most troublesome companions. As nearly as I can recollect, he addressed me in the following *encouraging* words:

“ My God ! madam, what a strange
“ story I have heard of you !—I am
“ told you are the identical Miss Mac-
“ gilroy, Lord Donachmuir’s niece,
“ that was so much talked of a few
“ years ago ; and that you are really
“ Linfield’s wife. — Good God ! if I
“ should ever have thought it !

My embarrassment was excessive ; but it did not hinder me from endeavouring to divert the discourse by saying, I came on behalf of Sir Luson, to intreat his Lordship to join in the plan the other creditors had agreed to for his enlargement.

“ Aye

“Aye, aye, I understand you,” replied my polite gentleman, “you come to petition me to let your husband out of jail.—’Tis a very proper request for a good wife; and I am very much disposed to indulge you: but I did not know, when I wrote to you, that you were married—it has disappointed me—I do not see how to contrive it, if that is the case, unless you and he agree to my terms, so as to secure me.”

I, foolishly fearing my nominal marriage might intercept some benefit awaiting him I came to serve, denied my being virtually Sir Luson’s wife. I said, he had married me for another person, and, therefore, I was informed the marriage was not binding. And so, indeed, Mr. Slarrow had instructed me.

“Oh! very well,” said Lord Cheston, “I am glad to find it so. When
“the

“ the lady seems disposed to remove
“ all impediments, matters will go on
“ swimmingly.

I began to quake. He seated himself by me, leaning forward, and staring me full in the face ; then began to talk in a very careless way about Sir Luson, and attempted to take hold of my hand. I drew it back : he, too *well-bred* to be at all disconcerted, said, “ Well, Ma-
“ dam, what have you to propose, if I
“ let this *no-husband* of yours out ?”

“ Propose, my Lord, I don’t under-
“ stand you.”

“ Oh, it is very intelligible :—I will
“ make you understand me in five mi-
“ nutes.—You want me to let him out
“ of the King’s Bench : I am willing
“ to do it ; but then I expect some re-
“ turn. Who does any thing without
“ a *quid pro quo* ?”

“ What

“What return ? I asked.

“Return ?” he repeated : “why I
“will tell you, Madam, what return.—
“If I set Linfield at liberty, I ex-
“pect you to remain with me as his
“hostage ; and on no other terms will
“I sign my name, even to keep him
“from starving, or from what he as
“richly deserves, the gallows.”

I needed no farther explanation ; but
resenting the insult offered me, and
heartily sorry for the folly I had been
guilty of, in exposing myself to it, I
rose to depart. His Lordship opposed
my rising, and stooping before me,
rang the bell. A livery servant obeyed
the call.—“Wine,” said his master.—
I tried again to get away ; but Sir Lu-
son could as easy have liberated him-
self.—I grew peremptory ; but in vain.
The servant brought decanters and
glasses. I asked if the hackney-coach
I came

I came in was at the door, and said I was coming to it directly.—“Not you, “indeed;” muttered his Lordship, as he filled a glass, “you shall not stir till “I please.” He then compelled me to sit down, and offered me the glass he had filled, which I very unwisely, but provoked beyond all bounds by his assurance, dashed out of his hand. He now swore I should never go: he would detain me, if it was only to punish me for breaking the glass. I might therefore, said he, as well throw my cloak behind me, and consider myself at home.

He again, keeping fast hold of me, rang the bell: the ready attendant came.—He ordered tea and coffee.—I struggled and strove to disengage myself.—“Sit quietly,” said he, “and hear “me talk to you.—What are you afraid “of?” “Of you, my Lord,” I replied. “Then you are a fool,” re-joined

joined he with becoming civility; “but
“however you shall hear me, and then,
“if you do not risque putting your wrist
“out by pulling against me, I will let
“your hand go.”

For this advantage I judged it prudent to be passive, and listened, trembling, to this soothing speech:—“Not
“to detain you, I will briefly come to
“the point. You know very well who
“I am, and what is in my power. I
“have just parted with a lady who has
“lived with me very comfortably these
“eight months: I am unhappy without a *chere amie*. You are very handsome, and not so rich as you deserve
“to be. You want me to do you a
“favour; I only ask a proper recompence. What objection can you have
“to me, a thousand a year, and a coach,
“which I am very willing to allow you,
“as long as you and I, as they say, set
“our horses together?”

Cool as I had resolved to be, I was furious with rage at the audacious proposition. I tried to catch at the bell I sat near, but in vain. I loudly reproached his Lordship with his infamous effrontery, and endeavoured to convince him, that I not only disdained his offers, but detested him. He laughed at me, while I, burst into tears of terror and indignation, which he heeded no more than my words.

The tea-equipage was brought.—
“Now,” says he, “Miss Hamilton,
“you will please to make tea for me
“and my friends : they will join us on
“your summons.—Come, I know by
“experience you are very good-natured
“—it is not the first time you have
“made tea for me :—consider, we are
“old acquaintance.”

I refused, and sat in sullen and motionless silence, till the party, to the
number

number of ten or a dozen, all gentlemen, though, I fancy, not "all honourable men," came up. No one appeared quite sober; but every one fixed a broad stare on me.—The whisper, the laugh went round; and presently one, more bold than the rest of the troop, came forward; and affected to address me very familiarly as mistress of the house, asked me some foolish question about the Opera, and turned away laughing, when he found I would make no reply.

The servants were waiting: the tea-table had, by Lord Cheston's order, been placed before me; and with a hearty good will I could have kicked it down. The water boiled furiously; and his Lordship again called on me to make the tea. His requisition was chorused by the whole company; and it was but too evidently their design to embarrass me for their diversion. I re-

plied at last very temperately, that I was a stranger, that I had waited on Lord Cheston, by his appointment, to ask a favour for another person, that I had been treated with the grossest insult, and that I would gratify persons who I saw were studious to affront me, with no compliance of any sort.—“ *Eh bien, Madame,*” replied his Lordship, with the most collected indifference : then rising and whispering one of his comrades, he said something I could not hear.

The libertines all got up, at what I suppose their leader's word of command, and retreated towards the door. I was now in jeopardy, indeed. An universal chill spread over my tottering frame : my heart beat with the utmost trepidation, and the vertigo of fainting was coming on, when I saw another gentleman, one whom I had not yet observed, and who looked very little like

like the rest, come forward : he was an old man ; and by his habit, I supposed, a clergyman. The uproar in the room had prevented my observing him at that moment enter it—he took no notice of any one of the gentlemen, but came immediately up to me.

Lord Cheston, as much surprised as myself, starting, cried out, “ What, “ Holmes, is it you ? How came you “ here ? ” I looked up ; and what joy ever exceeded mine, when I recognized in this old clergyman, my kind friend and instructor, Mr. Holmes, the chaplain of Captain Dibart’s regiment, and who had so greatly contributed to my comfort during my voyage to, and residence in America ?

Heaven, I thought, had sent him to my relief alone. He saw my terror, and seemed to guess its cause ; for catching me by the hand, he said, “ Miss

“Hamilton, you must leave this place
“immediately.” Lord Cheston, and
others of the party interfered to oppose
him; but the old man was resolute,
and lifting his aged but nervous arm,
he silenced all clamour.

He then, addressing himself with be-
coming respect to the master of the
house, said, “My Lord, I had for a
“time the care of your education. I
“consider myself as in some measure
“responsible for the effect of my in-
“structions; and that my character
“may not suffer in the eyes of the
“world, permit me to remove this
“lady;—a very unfit guest for such a
“house as your Lordship’s.

A cry of “Smoke the bishop,” now
echoed from all sides.—Lord Cheston
was silent and passive. His friends
supplied an inability, I suppose, they
attributed to intoxication, by an at-
tempt

tempt to separate me from Mr. Holmes, who still held me fast." "Whoever dares touch her," said my undaunted protector, "I will instantly fell him to the ground, and willingly answer it in any court of justice. I know the lady I am refusing; and by all that is sacred, if I am not suffered to take her away peaceably, I will make Lord Cheston, and every one here, repent it." His Lordship now interposed; he bid his companions keep off; and saying, "No, no, let the old fellow alone; for, drunk or sober, I love Holmes:" he allowed us to depart.

The conflicting agitations of my mind had happily prevented my sinking under the dread my perilous situation had excited; but my terrors overcame me before I could leave the house. Much against my will, I was forced to

remain, I suppose, a quarter of an hour in a parlour, before I could recover myself. As soon as I could stand, Mr. Holmes put me into the coach; and to my inexpressible astonishment, ordered it to the place where Mrs. Smith lodged.

He said very little to me in our way, only encouraging me to compose myself, by reminding me I was now out of all danger, and endeavouring to repress my violent sobs and tears. I had not power to ask for an explanation of his providential interference.

We alighted at the house he had ordered the coach to. I, without making any enquiry, implicitly went up to Mrs. Smith: Mr. Holmes staying below to discharge the coach.

Mrs. Smith was in agitation scarcely inferior to mine, and it was apparent
had

had been weeping. She was overjoyed at seeing me return; and her expressions indicated a knowledge of my danger. She interrupted herself in her congratulations, by saying, "But where is my father?"—I repeated, "your father?"—"Yes," said she, "did he not come to you? he called here; I told him where you were gone: he was alarmed, and said he would go to you:—sure it is not all a dream?"

Mr. Holmes, as she spoke these words, came to us.—"Oh here he comes!" cried Mrs. Smith, running to meet him, and throwing her arms round his neck as he advanced.—I was astonished, and really began to fear some insane prepossession had seized her mind.—"What does this mean, my dear Caroline?" said I to her: "O, it means, it means every thing that is blessed," she replied, quitting Mr. Holmes, down whose aged cheeks the tears had

D 5

forced

forced their way, and embracing me in violent commotion. "My father heard
"of my distress, and found me out!
"Oh! I have not seen him for many,
"many years before. — I never dared
"name him to you, nor own, when you
"talked of the Mr. Holmes you knew,
"that he was the kind parent whose
"love I had forfeited. He came this
"evening accidentally. I told him of
"your goodness to me and my chil-
"dren, and where you were gone. He
"was frightened, and said he would
"fetch you back directly; for he was
"sure Lord Cheston could have no
"good design in making you come to
"him. — And here is my father; my
"dearest, best Miss Hamilton, this, this
"is my father, and he says he will be
"good to me—O, I am so happy, I
"shall die:—and, he says, I shall see
"my mother again—O, I shall die with
"joy."

My

My tears flowed as fast as poor Caroline's ; nor was good Mr. Holmes, whose hand I had involuntarily, and in speechless extacy, snatched to my lips, at all more stoical. Every muscle of his countenance was contorted with the workings of his breast. When he could speak, he confirmed all that his daughter had said, adding to it the comfortable assurance, that he would stand forth our friend and protector.

We sat down together to a supper which, though frugal, as befitted our narrow circumstances, the joys of the moment rendered a luxurious repast.— We informed Mr. Holmes of our fears and our prospects, told him how willing Sir Luson Linfield was to marry Caroline, if it could be brought within his power ; and promised, that in return for the protection he offered us, we would, as *two* obedient daughters, submit ourselves entirely to his guidance.

He related to me what had befallen him, after our melancholy parting in America. By powerful intervention he had obtained leave once more to return to England, to recover his health. His wife had accompanied him : his daughters he had left well settled in America ; and his own situation was rendered permanently easy, by a very good living, to which an old friend had spontaneously presented him on his return. It was in Devonshire ; whence he had been called by afflicting tidings of his unfortunate daughter Caroline. — He said he had long cast her off from his affection, and had forbidden her to be named in his family ; “ but,” added he, “ who can hear “ a daughter is perishing for want, and “ not extend a hand to save her ?”

Poor Caroline's tears flowed afresh ; and I was obliged to wipe my eyes, and turn the discourse to a less galling subject. I enquired about Mr. Holmes's situation

situation in Devonshire, hoping it might afford in its neighbourhood a retreat for me and his daughter. He encouraged my wish to be near him, professing himself willing to take Caroline and her children home, on condition of her quitting Sir Luson, if he could not marry her; and offered to see Lord Cheston, on the business of his enlargement.—“I will serve you to the utmost
“of my power,” said he, “except in
“one point: I cannot see Sir Luson
“Linfield, till he is Caroline’s husband:
“a father cannot parley with his
“daughter’s seducer.”

Mr. Holmes staid late with us, and returned early the next morning. His presence cheered us during a week, which was spent in devising plans of peace, and endeavouring to bring Lord Cheston to terms: the former grew again hopeless, for the latter was inexorable; and we were forced to take up
with

with half of what Fortune might have done for us.

At the end of this period, this was the situation of our affairs.—I had accepted Lady Donachmuir's offered annuity, on which I meant to retire into Mr. Holmes's neighbourhood. He had agreed to Caroline's attaching herself to me, rather than living with him and her mother; and had promised her, in lieu of the expence of maintaining her and her family, a similar annuity to mine, with liberty to appropriate what part of it we thought proper to the use of Sir Luson, whom, fore against our wills, we must leave in bondage.

The dissolution of my marriage, and the bringing about a match between Sir Luson and Caroline, he thought a chimerical idea, in our present circumstances; as beside the usual heavy expences, we had an opposition to expect from

from Lady Jane Alderway, if we stirred a step towards her discarded lover's marrying again. Mr. Slarrow, sanguine as ever, and now released from confinement, begged a conference on the subject. Mr. Holmes met him, and we began discussing the question.—Mr. Slarrow vehemently urged us to commence legal proceedings instantly, which he offered to conduct for us at a moderate expence. We hesitated: he then advised and proved the safety of an immediate marriage between Sir Luson and Mrs. Smith, which he pledged his honour no law on earth could abrogate. But however indebted we were to his friendship, and whatever deference we entertained for his positive opinions, the fear of Lady Jane haunted us; and Caroline, the generous, noble spirited Caroline, refused to involve him in difficulty, who had involved her in ruin.—He was so vehement in supporting the counsel he gave us, and so very warm in his interest for us, that we all ungratefully

gratefully began to entertain a suspicion, that he sought his own emolument in embroiling us.

After a long conversation, in which he found us inflexible, he departed in ill humour. Little more was thought of him or his projects. A day was fixed for our quitting London ; and Mr. Holmes having put every thing in train for us, set off a few days before us, to apprise his wife of our coming, and to prepare for our temporary accommodation. I had no idea of danger in his absence ; but he was no sooner gone, than we were sufficiently warned.

In order to contract our expences as much as possible, I had removed into the same lodging with Caroline. It was evening : she was busy at work ; I was nursing her youngest child, and we were tolerably cheerful, anticipating the tranquil joys of our promised retreat, when

when suddenly a gentleman was announced. We could not refuse admission to any body ; and being two, we were courageous. The gentleman was shewn up : he was a person I never recollected to have seen before, of a decent, neat appearance ; but hardly claiming the designation under which he had been introduced. He bowed ; we curtsied ; and he sat down at our request.

A dead silence ensued, which I broke by asking our visitor his business. — He prefaced it, by an earnest recommendation of secrecy : we unconditionally promised it. He then proceeded to tell us he was clerk to Mr. Slarrow, and that he had had an opportunity of discovering such practices as he thought it incumbent on him to communicate to the parties concerned : we, he understood, were those parties : he therefore desired our attention to two papers he had

had brought with him, which his master, who was gone to spend the evening at Lord Cheston's, had carelessly left on his desk. He then read them aloud. One was a billet from Lady Jane Alderway, thanking Mr. Slarrow for his information, desiring him to continue it, and promising, if an opportunity of prosecuting Sir Lafon Linfield offered, that he should be the person she employed.—The other was a longer letter from Lord Cheston, of which I had the honour to be the subject. It adverted to his disappointment when Mr. Holmes rescued me from him; it spoke of my interview with his Lordship, as an excellently planned scheme, and attributed the credit of it to Mr. Slarrow: it expressed a libertine passion for me, and concluded with calling on the person it was addressed to, to devise some other means of decoying me to Grosvenor-square again, when *old Argus* should have left London.

Much

Much light was thrown on some hitherto mysterious circumstances, and on good Mr. Slarrow's friendly zeal, by these two epistles ; and I felt the utmost gratitude for the communication of them. — The young man modestly added his advice to us, to admit no stranger, and not to leave the house on any consideration, as he did not doubt his master was now gone to Lord Cheston, to concert measures with him for the purpose mentioned. We sincerely thanked our informer for his good will, promised to observe his directions, and offered him, on his quitting us, a guinea, which was one half of our stock of cash ; but he would accept no gratuity.

Next morning Slarrow came. We had given orders for his non-admission. He was a little noisy in the entry, but presently went away. My fears were so awakened by these intimations of treachery,

treachery, that I began to consult with Caroline on the practicability of leaving London immediately. Her wishes accorded with mine; and we made the necessary enquiries; but no coach going till three days afterwards, and then no place being vacant, and our purses deterring us from a more expensive mode of travelling, we agreed to abide by what Mr. Holmes had settled for us, which would subject us but to a short delay, and to observe strictly the admonitions of our incognito friend.

About eight o'clock in the evening of this day Mrs. Smith was enquired for by a stranger. The maid of the house, when she brought up the request or rather demand of this stranger to be admitted, added, that he was a *queer-looking* man, not much like a gentleman. He must send up word what his business is, said Mrs. Smith.—There was no need of this ceremony; for the
man

man bluntly entered, and a *queer-looking* being indeed he was. When desired to sit down, he replied with a grin, that he could not stay : he had particular business with Mrs. Smith, and must speak with her in private.

Caroline threw a supplicating look at me ; and I replied for her, that Mrs. Smith was then in private ; that he might say to her whatever he pleased, as we had no secrets, and that he might depend on it, neither she nor I should leave the room.

The man, or rather monster, grinned more ghastly than before ; and, perhaps, determined by my peremptory disobedience, not to soften what he had to say, replied, in the roughest manner, that he was a sheriff's officer, and had authority to arrest Mrs. Smith, for a debt of forty pounds, due to Mr. Borle, a coal-merchant in the city : his authority
he

he then produced. I, believing it all a trick, asked Mrs. Smith if she had ever incurred such a debt. She said, "Yes; but it had been discharged long since." "—Produce his receipt then," said the grim tyrant.—"That I cannot do," she replied. "When Lord Cheston seized my goods for rent, I, in my fright, left all my papers :—if they can by any means be traced, I am sure the receipt may be found. Let the coal-merchant be sent for, and he will acknowledge the payment, for I had his own receipt for the money." While Caroline spoke, I could not but endeavour to penetrate into this business—Lord Cheston seized her goods for rent, and she left all her papers behind her.—Had he made love to her, instead of to me, I should have supposed this a trick to get her into his power.

The man, unmoved by her protestations, replied—"Hows'ever that may
" be,

“be, you must please to come along :
“if the debt is not due, you’ll only be
“the sooner at liberty.—I must do as I
“am ordered ; so you’ll please to come :
“I have a coach waiting : you’ll only
“go to my house, where you may
“have every accommodation.”

Poor Caroline’s agitation deprived her of speech : she dropped into a chair, and I was forced to neglect her to parley with the iron-faced messenger of Law, not of Justice. Words were vain, resistance was vain ; and now go my poor Caroline must, at least for a time. I saw the necessity of submission, even to the vilest oppression ; and comforting Mrs. Smith and myself that it could only prove a confinement till her father could come up again to us, I persuaded her to yield, and promised to accompany her. She sobbing, fainting, and dying, gave way to my advice.

The

The man at first opposed my going with her, and wanted me to remain where I was with the children; but here I was resolute. I said, I alone could maintain Mrs. Smith till her friends released her. I obliged him to wait, till I could pack up a few of our cloaths and settle with our landlady. Poor Caroline was borne to the coach: I followed with her youngest child in my arms, and leading the others, delighted, sweet simpletons! with the idea of riding.

We were soon at our place of confinement, where a woman, of a tolerable decent demeanor, appeared as mistress of the house. We were shewn into a neat bed-chamber intended for Mrs. Smith alone: I was offered another; but, resolved for my own sake as well as her's, that we would not be separated, I prevailed to have a field-bed brought into

into her room, on condition I paid as if occupying another chamber.

Knowing that our treatment in such a place must depend on what we spent, and trusting, that if we were hard run for cash, Mr. Holmes would assist us, I began to enquire what we could have for supper. The woman replied civilly, that supper was ordered. "By whom?" I asked. She said, she knew nothing more than that her husband had provided a supper.—My only fear now was, that the people, having no idea of our poverty, might have transgressed the bounds of our finances. I could get no satisfaction, and was compelled to turn to a more important care—the wretched Caroline; whom all my exhortations and endeavours could scarcely keep alive.

We were summoned to supper in the adjoining room. We desired rather to have it where we were; but this was too

great indulgence. It was, to be sure, five times the entertainment we should have bespoke, and really more than all we had in the world could pay for.— Before we sat down, I protested against it, ordered the wine and every thing superfluous to be removed; but my orders were not regarded.

We had put the children to bed, and now sat down by ourselves, determined to eat only of one simple dish. Caroline wept incessantly, nor could I blame her sorrow, though I was convinced it would be of short continuance. I assured her I would write to her father by the first post, if she would but eat. The acquiescent creature strove to obey me; but scarcely had we tasted a mouthful, when the door was thrown open, and in came a gentleman, or one that had every appearance of being so.

I rose;

I rose ; whether prompted by fear or civility, I will not pretend to decide. It was, I was convinced when he approached, Lord Cheston. He affected, for it was evidently affectation, the utmost surprise and concern at the misfortune that had befallen us : he wondered why I should chuse to be here, when, as he was informed, there was nothing to detain me. I said, I would never leave my friend in distress. “ Come, “ come,” said he, taking out his pocket-book, “ let me have the pleasure of setting your friend at liberty. The debt, “ I understand is forty pounds : I have “ as much as that about me.”

Caroline’s spirit got the better of her affliction. She would not suffer the debt to be discharged : she was certain Mr. Borle, to whom the money was said to be due, was too honest a man to deny her having paid it : “ I desire he may “ be sent for,” said she, “ or that your “ Lordship

“ Lordship would produce the papers
“ found in my bureau, when you had
“ the humanity to turn a helpless wo-
“ man and three young children into
“ the street for rent.”

“ Well but,” replied Lord Cheston,
hesitating, and at a loss, “ I know no-
“ thing of your bureau ; and as for the
“ man, he is dead, or he is a bankrupt,
“ or—” —“ Be it so,” said Caroline ;
“ we have only then to wait till my fa-
“ ther can be fetched out of Devon-
“ shire : he I am sure will protect us
“ from injustice, or release us.”

His Lordship, not in the least con-
founded, now more openly attacked
me with an offer of the money. I said,
I would accept a release from no gen-
tleman on earth but Mr. Holmes, and
that therefore we must request his Lord-
ship to withdraw.—“ Not yet,” he re-
plied ; “ I have not supped. When I
heard

“heard what a respectable companion
“Mrs. Smith was to have here, I took
“care you should not go to bed sup-
“perless.”

Caroline and I, at the same instant, quitted the table when we learnt who had covered it. Lord Cheston very coolly seated and helped himself, all the while talking to us, and inviting us to eat. We were mute. Caroline's terror was comfortably diminished by indignation, and my courage far surpassed my hopes.—He began to rally us on our silence; and as if on purpose to provoke us to speak, he told me, I had made him change his supping-place; for that he intended, hearing I was likely to be left alone, to have passed his evening with me at Mrs. Smith's lodgings.

Most sincerely did I thank Heaven,
that had determined me to follow the

fortune of my friend.—She whispered me, that we had better retire and leave Lord Cheston.—I nodded assent, and we moved towards the door. He perceived our design, and starting up in his chair, with an oath that made me jump, he swore if I stirred, he would follow me. “You can go no further than the next room,” said he; “and depend on it, if you do go, I will break the door open, which I can do as easily as say it.”

It was imprudent, in our situation, to court extremities: I therefore stopped, relying on my own courage to oppose the iniquity with which we were encompassed. Lord Cheston continued his conversation and his supper, drinking bumpers of wine. “Now,” said he to me, “are you not a great fool to refuse my kindness?—Come, I will make you another offer. Go home with me in my chariot, which is at the door, and I will not only set your friend

“ friend at liberty, but I will contrive with you a scheme for dissolving your marriage, which I hear you have set your heart on, and I will pay all the expences of it.— Come, Mrs. Smith, advise Miss Hamilton not to be so obstinate.”

Caroline, now as courageous as myself, firmly replied, she would not purchase the greatest possible benefit, either for herself or for me, at the price of her integrity : that she was certain his Lordship would never force me out of that house alive, nor would she survive our separation. — “ Hey day !” cried he, “ what fine ranting this is ! you shall soon see what I can do, when I have had another bottle of wine.”

Hope, at this moment, first beamed on my mind. He had drank all the abundant quantity that had been prepared for us : he wanted more to give

passion the entire victory. As he rose to order it, he staggered comfortably : he clapped his hand to his forehead ; and I saw the fumes operating hastily in our favour. I concluded, he could not long before he came to us, have left his dinner-table, from which he seldom rose quite clear-headed ; and on what he had had there, what we had seen him drink, and what he now called for, I relied for our safety, and determined to wait the event with patience ; as any disturbance in his progress to the shades of oblivion, might be detrimental to our interests.

I rejoiced to see two bottles brought, instead of the one he had ordered. He was asked by the man, who I suppose well understood the climax of intoxication, whether he chose any brandy. " O yes, certainly."—It was brought. By this time, I believe he hardly knew the bottles from the glasses : he filled
and

and drank, and deluged the table with the propitious liquor, unconscious of what he was doing, while I grieved to see one drop wasted. Still eloquent, he attempted to argue; but his tongue staggered as much as his legs, and a large glass of *eau de vie* to us, which he hiccuped out, "should shew us what " it was to be obstinate," laid him flat on the floor, and relieved us, after a two hours' agony, from a situation, compared to which all others I had ever experienced, except that in Grosvenor-square, were situations of safety.

He who had so lately called up all our fears, having now kindly reduced himself to the harmless inability of a log, our greatest distress was to get rid of such an incumbrance. To leave him where he was and retire to our chamber, though the least trouble, was hardly safe, as we knew not in what degree liquor operated on him, and the

torpid lion might rouse, shake himself, and again seek his prey. I proposed calling up the people of the house, and leaving it to them to dispose of him as they thought proper ; but Mrs. Smith, unwilling that he should at any rate continue under the same roof with us, and recollecting his inviting me to go home with him in his chariot, called up the man who had brought the wine, and desired he would send Lord Cheston's servants to fetch their master down.

At another time, what would have been my feelings on such an occasion ? Bred up as I was, I should, had I retained ancient pride and prejudices, have died with horror at being seen in such a place and with such company ; but misfortune, like vice, relaxes nicety ; and I had every comfort recititude of intention could afford me.

Two footmen came up to the relief of their noble master, who, blessings on him ! had lain perfectly quiet since his fall.—The men seemed very adroit at removing him, whence I reasonably inferred frequent practice in the art. One took his shoulders, the other his feet, and having turned the corps so as to descend the stairs with propriety, they were departing.

We spoke not a word ; but the man, whom I may, without a quibble, call *the head man*, turning about as if to reconnoitre the field of battle in which Bacchus had defeated his votary, cast his eyes on Mrs. Smith ; and why, I knew not, he at the same instant unfortunately let go his hold of Lord Cheston, who, with a violence I could scarcely help laughing at, but which extorted a deep groan from him, and would have waked any thing not quite lost in stupefaction, came heavy to the
E 6 ground.

ground. The man at the feet called out, "Take care, George;" but of all care, George was just then incapable: he suffered his Lordship to remain on the floor, while with eyes still rivetted on Caroline, and with uplifted hands, this support of fallen nobility exclaimed, "Good Lord! it is my mistress!"

The other man quitting the feet, now stared too; and their master seemed no longer thought on. Thanks to the goodness of the vintage, the Peer remained perfectly still. George, recovering from his amazing amazement, came forward to Mrs. Smith, who by this time had recollected his face.—He eagerly asked, "Don't you remember me, Ma'am? George Tims, that lived with you in Welbeck-street. Don't you remember I would have staid with you for half my wages, when you discharged me? O
" dear

“ dear ! that you should be in such a
“ place ! Tell me, is it a great debt ?
“ I have got ten guineas at home,
“ and I am sure, I could raise twenty
“ more.”

Such true benevolence affected me almost as much as her, whose peculiar virtues and distresses had called it forth, and whose eyes I saw streaming with tears. She urged George to be gone with his master ; but he, poor fellow ! was divided between his willingness to obey her, and his reluctance to quit her ; nor would he do either till he had pressed his offers of service, and prevailed with us to let him call on us the next morning at eight o'clock.

We passed, as you will believe, a comfortless night : neither of us slept for a moment, yet we were not positively unhappy, for in George Tims, Caroline assured me, we should find a faithful assistant ; and we beguiled part
of

of the time in consulting how we should best make use of his promptitude to serve us.

Those who have experienced disease of body and inquietude of mind, universally, I believe, acknowledge the superior misery of the latter state.— They, and they only, will credit me, when I assert, that in this complication of misfortune, I suffered far less, than while in the enjoyment of all that cheers life, under Mrs. Semhurst's roof. The conflict of love and duty, was far more tormenting than imprisonment, or want; or fear would be; and even clouded as my mind was now, the recollection of the name of Cyril charged it with a blacker hue. Perhaps calamity was my mind's medicine: had I retired to the peace I courted, how could I have borne reflection on the past?

Punctually at eight next morning
came

came honest George Tims. He had brought us his whole stock of savings, and confidently promised us a larger sum, if we thought proper to make use of it. We were not, I hope, deficient in gratitude; but we declined accepting his bounty, and convinced him he might serve us much more effectually, if he would be at the trouble of conveying a letter I had written for Mr. Holmes to the post-house, and a note into the city for Mr. Borle, the coal-merchant, at whose suit Mrs. Smith had been arrested.

These offices our diligent lacquey cheerfully undertook, and at noon brought Mr. Borle to us. He was astonished to hear that Mrs. Smith was in confinement for a debt to him, which, he said, his books would prove she had long before discharged. He took due pains to assure her of his entire ignorance of the transaction: he was convinced,

vinced, by the circumstances we related, that the whole was a most malicious business : all of it he could not comprehend, for we did not chuse to mention Lady Jane Alderway's interest in it, nor Lord Cheston's honourable pursuit. We were convinced, that with respect to ourselves, the cruelty we suffered under had two objects for its aim ; the one, revenge on Mrs. Smith for not acceding to Slarrow's scheme ; the other, betraying me into Lord Cheston's power : by the failure of the former, Slarrow had been disappointed of the profits of an expensive litigation : on the success of the latter, he depended for a handsome *douceur*.

Mr. Borle perceiving the complexion of the affair, and influenced by my fears, lest we might, when released here, fall into some other snare, first called up the man of the house, and threatened him with a disclosure of the whole

whole to a power that could crush him, if he did not suffer us quietly to depart without expence of any kind. He bound himself to be responsible for the debt, if it ever could be proved ; but the man's faltering tongue, and knocking knees, gave us a receipt in full, and manifested his being pretty deep in the secret. Mr. Borle next, with great humanity, pressed us to go to his house in the city, where we might be certain of safety, and we gladly consented. He sent George Tims, who would not yet leave us, for a coach, gave the sheriff's officer his address for Mr. Holmes, in case he came there, as we expected, in quest of us, and bore us all off. We were soon at Blackfriars-bridge, in the neighbourhood of which we were to remain till Mr. Holmes came to us, or till the appointed day of our departure for Devonshire arrived.

We

We were received with the utmost kindness by Mr. Borle, whose house, though he was a single man, was capable of admitting us commodiously.—Here, we hoped, we were in safety, and permitted George Tims, who insisted on enrolling himself our servant, to go up to Grosvenor-square, for a discharge from his master. But two hours was the utmost period of our tranquillity.

Mr. Borle was obliged to be out on business which his interference for us had postponed. He had ordered a dinner for us at which he promised to meet us; but scarcely was he gone, when Lord Cheston and Mr. Sparrow came in pursuit of us. They sent up their names, and a demand to be admitted. We refused: a maid-servant opened the door: she could not oppose them, and up they came.

Caroline was frightened almost to death;

death ; but my spirit rose.—All the spirit in the world, however, would have availed little, had not the maid, seeing visitors had forced themselves on us, and fearing their design was to rob us, sent up one of the clerks, a stout resolute man. He came, before Lord Cheston, not yet quite sober, had ended his first abusive reproaches. Such a scene ensued as must make every woman tremble. The clerk, when he saw we wished the gentlemen gone, insisted on their withdrawing. If, he said, they had any real business with us, they might remain in the compting-house till Mr. Borle came home, who would settle it with them. Oaths from the Peer, and curses from the Lawyer, were all the reply he could get. Finding remonstrance vain, and provoked to excess, he collared Lord Cheston, and vowed he would throw him down the stairs. Sparrow interposed to rescue his good friend : they came to blows, and it was a downright boxing-match, in

in which our champion had much the worst of it, when in bounced George Tims, and lending his able assistance to the other's strength, they sent his Lordship and his friend headlong to the street-door.

We had appeased the crying of the children, and their mother was a little recovered of her fright, when Mr. Borle returned. He saw how disagreeably we were circumstanced, and was of my opinion, that our enemies, whose end he guessed to be the getting us into their power, would not cease persecuting us while we remained in town, which must be at least three days longer, if we waited the expiration of the earliest time. Mr. Borle, sincerely pitying us, advised us to set off that evening ; but really we were so thoroughly alarmed, that could we have defrayed the expence of a journey in post-chaises, the fear of a pursuit would have deterred

tered us. "Well then," said our kind friend, "I can devise a better scheme for you. There is a West-country trader to sail to-morrow morning, from a wharf near the Tower : it will carry you within a few miles of the place you wish to go to. The accommodations are decent ; such, I am sure as you will not object to. I have no doubt I can procure the cabin for you, and then you may go safely and immediately." — We accepted the proposal. — Mr. Borle took on himself the charge of satisfying Mr. Holmes's enquiries : he negotiated the business for us, and accompanying us to Mrs. Smith's lodgings, to fetch our remaining cloathes, and then down the river, he left us in our cabin.

Happy were we when we had entered the dingy yacht ; for here we thought ourselves in perfect security. The
master

master received us very civilly, and having waited only for us, gave instant orders for sailing, comforting us with the hope of a swift passage, if the wind continued fair, and did not become too violent. It then blew, as I should at another time have said, tremendously ; but now I thought, the more wind the more good fortune.

We went, as our unpleasant feelings informed us, at a furious rate all the dismal night ; and such was the roughness of the element, that I could scarce persuade myself we were not crossing the Atlantic, instead of coasting it from London, into the West of England.—To rest, was an idle attempt ; but we had no idea of danger till day-light, when the master came to us with a woe-begone countenance, and told us, the tempest, which had defied all steerage during the night, had actually blown us over to the French shore. He assured
us,

us, that as the wind was then considerably abated, we were in no personal danger, but he thought it probable the vessel would go ashore, or that at best he must land us on the coast of Bretagne.

This was a most distressing mortification to us, who so ardently longed to be in Devonshire, and who knew Mr. Holmes would, in a few days, be much alarmed at our delay. Added to this uneasiness, we had the consideration, that such was the straitness of our finances, we were unable to support ourselves any where, or to procure another passage to England. Little did we dream, that an evil was impending that would blot out these lighter clouds in our prospect.

The ship went ashore, as the master had predicted, and struck with such violence as made me expect the sea to rush in at every joint ; but she held together

gether completely. The master came to us immediately. Caroline's fears really now kept up my spirits, as I saw some one must exert themselves to take care of the children, and I was the best able. I asked the master what hope there was of our getting off?—"Getting off!" he repeated staring. "God bless you! we shall never get off: a French prison is all we can hope for." I then, and not till then, recollected that we were in an enemy's country. England was at that time at war with France; and we were indeed prisoners.

I comforted my desponding companion in the best way I could; for with regard to myself, I was grown almost indifferent to what befel me, I had so often been balked, that I would set my heart on nothing; and I began to consider, that as we must be thrown into a foreign country, our situation, provided we were tolerably treated, might

might be better than liberty, for as prisoners, we must be protected and subsisted. Caroline had still a greater share of that troublesome commodity, beauty, than myself; and we both had but too much cause to envy the homeliest of our sex, whenever we had to encounter difficulties. The "hey-day of our youth" was past; we saw ourselves as we really were, and had smarted too severely for fine eyes and clear complexions, to feel any complacency in the possession of them.

We learnt that we were ashore at St. Malo; and soon after the vessel had struck, boats came to our assistance.— We were all safely landed; and the pity and commiseration of the multitude that flocked to gaze on us, encouraged us to hope the greatest of our sufferings was over with our danger.— A party of soldiers came down to escort us. We shrunk a little at first sight of

firelocks and fixed bayonets ; but the officer at the head of this detachment, soon relieved our fears, by assuring us of, and pledging his honour for, our safety. Even poor Caroline took heart, when to her request that she might not be separated from her children, he replied, that he would use his utmost interest with the Commandant to prevent it.

To the Commandant's house we were conducted : the distance was not great ; but every thing about it wore a most formidable military aspect. He was a very old man, and his countenance and address promised us every possible consolation. Caroline, surrounded by her children, the youngest of whom was very quietly, and *sans ceremonie*, taking its usual breakfast, was a sight that moved his humanity. He enquired into the circumstances of our misfortune, regretted that it was not in his power

power to give us liberty and immediately forward us to England ; told us we might rely on every alleviation our distress would admit of, and gave us his word, that wherever he found it necessary to place us, Mrs. Smith, her children, and myself should remain together.—“ But poor George Tims !” said Caroline, looking at me. The Commandant asked what she meant. I said, she was anxious for a faithful servant who had accompanied us. For him too our fears were eased. Our generous friend took down his name, and promised that he should be included in the next cartel, which he hoped, for our sakes, would be settled in a few weeks.

After a short consultation with some officers who attended him, and in which I could perceive there was more than one opinion, the Commandant came up to us, and in a low voice told us, he

was desirous of doing every thing for our accommodation, that would not endanger the respect due to us. He said, he could and would, if we preferred it, keep us in the garrison, but he could not answer for our quiet, in a place so crowded with officers, and where there was hardly a room to which every one had not promiscuous access; "and who knows," added he, still speaking French, "but you might, if you staid here, make us your prisoners? I am afraid you would be greater tyrants than you will find us."—Resuming then his more serious look, he said, he had determined, unless we opposed it, to remove us females, with the children, to a convent in the neighbourhood of Dinant, to the lady abbess of which, who was his near relation, he would confide us on our parole.

We made suitable acknowledgments to the generous Gaul, for such an instance

stance of unexpected goodness : he received our thanks with the modesty of a great mind ; and after regaling us with elegant refreshments, he ordered a post-coach to convey us to the convent.

A separation from George Tims was absolutely necessary. The Commandant promised us his protection of him, and having politely expressed his intention of visiting us, and given strict orders that our baggage should remain untouched, he handed us to our carriage, and we set off, guarded by six horse soldiers.

The distance from St. Malo to Dinant is only three French posts. We reached our asylum in safety, and were kindly received by the lady we were consigned to.

It was a sisterhood of the rigid order of *Carmes dechaussées* : we did not there-

fore expect or meet with that cordial reception the *Beguines* would have afforded us. The nuns appeared wholly occupied in the duties of their vocation : the charge of prisoners was not an enviable honour : we were Hugonots, and consequently had no claim on them, but that of common charity and catholic benevolence.

But, whatever their sentiments of us or our intrusion, we had no reason to reproach them with want of hospitality. Two apartments, not at all deficient in comfort, were allotted us : our table was served liberally, and not with any of the excessive austerity of the house œconomy ; nor were we expected to observe their fasts, or be present at their devotions. But choice soon attached us to some of their forms. We begged that we might be permitted, in some measure, to coalesce with our protectors ; that we might make a difference in
days,

days, in the same proportion as they did; and well convinced that sincerity is the only essential of religion, and that all who possess it are of the same communion, however in other respects disagreeing, we intreated that we might once a day join their prayers and thanksgivings, since none stood more in need of the Divine protection, or had more cause to be grateful for it, than ourselves. The lady abbess, to whom we made this request, received it as we wished: her attention to us was increased: she studied to make our time pass pleasantly, and our situation as far as possible happy.

The Commandant fulfilled his promise of visiting us, and himself wrote to Mr. Holmes an account of our detention and prospect. **He**, in a few days, came again, and brought us a reply from Mr. Holmes, that rendered us completely satisfied: he had undergone

much trouble and fatigue on our account ; but the news of our safety compensated for every thing. He had found a house for Caroline and myself in his neighbourhood, which he described in the most inviting terms. He said, he should busy himself in preparing it for our reception ; and hoped our troubles were nearly at an end, as the establishment of a cartel was certain, and not far distant.

A residence of three weeks among the *Carmes dechaussées* restored in a comfortable degree our health and strength, and almost (so powerful is example) made me with myself one of their number. The tranquil delight they seemed to experience in the monotony of their institution, the absence of all passions, and the steady pace they held towards that state of existence, which claims our first, and, indeed, all our attention, made me at once admire and
envy

envy them. He, for whom alone I could have wished to re-enter the world, had for my sake quitted it. My mind told me, I should, in this retreat, be nearer him than in any other ; that here alone I should find the path he had so lately trodden before me. Will you then, my dear Madam, discard me entirely from your friendship, if I confess, that, having about me none of that theological scrupulosity which could deter me from a situation I believed favourable to my highest interests, and best adapted to my wounded mind, I listened to the exhorting insinuations of the abbess and some of the sisters, with more attention than I now approve, or than Caroline, who had, in her youth, been well-instructed in the pre-eminent simplicity of the Protestant faith, and taught, as far as was consistent with charity, to abhor the tenets it rejected.

But even from your candour, my dear Lady Catherine, I cannot but expect to be reminded of my former opposition to Mrs. Dibart, when I fancied her in similar danger. I acknowledge the inconsistency; and in my justification have nothing to alledge but this truth, that however disposed I might be to renounce the world, and for that purpose to forego my religion, the advantage was so intimately connected with the means, that no other would have tempted me; for, if I know myself, I can truly say, I would not, even for the highest gratification the possession of the world could have offered, have admitted into my mind a deliberation on such a sacrifice.

Caroline soon perceived the willing ear I lent to conversations on this subject; and foreseeing the consequence to me and to herself, she used all endeavours

vours to fortify me. I hoped to have pacified her and obtained her acquiescence, by a promise which I religiously resolved to perform, before I abandoned her. It was my intention to prevail on Lady Donachmuir to transfer to her my designed annuity, with which, and under the protection of her father and mother, I doubted not she might live very comfortably ; and as by thus withdrawing myself, I should remove the chief obstacle to her marriage with Sir Luson Linfield, I hoped, notwithstanding any opposition from Lady Jane Alderway, that it might be happily accomplished.

But when I thought so, I wronged Caroline : she would hear of no compensation if she lost me : she would prefer a cottage with me, to splendour even with Sir Luson Linfield. My mind, she said, was a balsam to her's, and it

was I alone who could speak peace to her lacerating sorrows.

I was affected by her expressions, but not persuaded to give up my intention. It was the continual subject of my meditations : they were daily and hourly biaſſed by thoſe who ſurrounded me ; and I could ruminate on the life I was deliberating on, till I fancied the ſpirit of my lamented Cyril called me to it. The conflict of oppoſing, and nearly equal conſiderations, nothing but the importance of the point could have enabled me to bear. Never-ending peace, I thought, was the goal in view ; and moſt reluctantly did I liſten to Caroline, when ſhe diſſuaded me from the courſe. It was, however, my ſettled determination, not to attempt the purchaſe of even ſuch a novel bleſſing as peace, at the expence of another. Indeed it would have been the height of deluſion not to have made Caroline's conſent one condition ;

dition; for what peace could I have enjoyed, when I had made her unhappy?

As we were allowed to walk not only in the garden of the convent but even to a certain distance in a wood with which it was skirted, and as the weather, though it was yet but early in February, was very delightful, I frequently, while Caroline's maternal cares occupied her, sauntered abroad to indulge at liberty in my usual ruminations. In one of these solitary strolls, being wholly absorbed in the discussion of the grand question, *A nun, or not a nun?* I found myself, when I regained my presence of mind, farther from the convent than I had ever yet been or was allowed to go. I turned about hastily; I saw nothing of the house; and rather alarmed at my vagabond folly, I quickened my pace to get back before the sun set. I came to two paths: choice puzzled me, and I stood

stood a while to consider. At last, from circumstances as I thought of remembrance, I took that to the right hand; I walked in no little fear and anxiety: not a chimney of our convent, or the least sign of any other habitation could I discern. I grew seriously frightened, and the day closing suddenly, it grew seriously dark. I began to think a night passed in the wood must be the least of my punishments for my indiscretion.

The path formed an acute elbow, which entirely threw me out of all conjecture; and I saw nothing preferable to going on. I soon came to a high road: here I hoped to gain at least information. I saw no passengers to direct me immediately. Fearful of losing time, I resolved to get forward; and as I had before erred by taking to the right, I now fancied I might in some degree retrieve my error by turning
ing

ing to the left. The evening grew so obscure that I could scarcely discern any objects. Passengers I met or overtook none, but such as were going post, and my efforts to stop them failed.

At length, when it was very nearly what we call *pitch dark*, the chill evening-breeze brought with it the welcome sound of human voices. The noise came behind me. Almost exhausted with fatigue, and thoroughly frightened, I sat down by the side of the road to wait the event. The party were singing not unpleasantly; I heard the grinding of wheels, and I listened eagerly.

I could just discern that the wheels were those of an open cart or waggon, on which I thought I saw several persons sitting. They would have passed me unheeded; and notwithstanding I used every effort in my power to make myself

myself heard, their song almost overpowered my voice. At last they paused, and the waggon stopped; the driver called to know who was near, I suppose: I answered by a request for a direction to the convent of *Carmes dechauffées* near Dinant.

The dialect of Bretagne and my more Parisian language were unintelligible to each other. The man quitted me, and a woman descended: she spoke a different language, but equally foreign to my ear. I thought it the *Patois* of Savoy: I therefore framed my question in Italian. Before she could comprehend my meaning, another woman descended. I again spoke French, strongly reminded by my present difficulty of similar, though inferior distress, when I first attempted to converse with my benevolent and not forgotten friends, Donna Isabella, and Donna Emilia de Vidos.

The

The last woman now replied to me in tolerable Italian. I understood her, and she me; but she was too ignorant of the country she was travelling through, to give me any information, nor did the geographical science of her companions exceed her's. The driver might perhaps possess the important secret; but his dialect, as it was unintelligible to us all, was an effectual bar to his communication and my wishes.

My Italian friend expressed great pity for me, and seemed much more desirous than able to help me. Her companions, impatient of the delay, were calling to her, and she, as the only means she could contrive for assisting me, advised me to mount the waggon and proceed with them to the little town of La Meziere, where they were to lodge that night, and from whence I might probably procure a conveyance, or at least a direction to the place I sought.

fought. To the former hope my entire want of money was an obstacle; but the latter was within the scope of my expectations.

I ascended the slow-moving vehicle: and now, my dear madam, you behold me, by one of fortune's whimsical revolutions, exchanging the religious society of the *Carmes dechaussées*, for the company of a set of strolling-players, Savoyards, who had skirted France, and exhibited their histrionic powers in all the principal towns in their route, and who, as they informed me, were proceeding with all dispatch, and with all their scenic property, to Rennes, through which place it was expected a plenipotentiary from his Most Faithful to his Most Christian Majesty was, in a few days, to pass.

We arrived at La Meziere late at night. We put up at an inn, and a
candle

candle being brought us, all eyes were fixed on me. The troop, I observed, consisted of twelve persons, an equal number of each sex, none of whom appeared to have reached five and twenty years of age. Some spoke Italian tolerably, some a little French, and all the Patois. The female, who had first attached herself to me, was treated with marked deference; and to this, and her apparent good-will, I trusted for security. She was a pretty little woman, and not more than twenty. A supper was ordered, of which they civilly invited me to partake. At first I declined it, in hopes of getting immediately away; but finding there was no chance of a conveyance to Dinant that night, I accepted their kindness, thinking reasonable acquiescence my highest prudence.

On farther enquiry I learnt that I was at the distance of four French leagues from

from Dinant, to which it was merely a chance that I might return from the place I had been brought to ; but from Rennes there was no doubt of my getting a conveyance, and thither my companions, who seemed of a truly sociable disposition, urged me to proceed with them the next day. I not accepting the overture immediately, and perhaps betraying some uneasiness in my looks, Fossana, the heroine to whom I was already so much indebted, took me aside and offered me a share of her bed, adding for my comfort, “ *Non è cosa da temere, Signora: siamo tutte gente onesti.* “ *Non sia lei spaventata: siamo, nonostante i nostri abiti diversi, tutte donne; le une rappresentano i caratteri maschi, le altre i femminini; ma sono tutte tutte del di lei sesso.*—There is nothing to fear, Madam, we are all honest people. Do not be afraid: we are, notwithstanding our different dresses, all women :
“ some

“Some represent male characters, others
“the female, but they are every one of
“your own sex.

I was comforted indeed; and not more by the substance of these words, than by the kindness with which they were uttered. I had feared much from the ribaldry and licentiousness of the *gentlemen* in such a herd; but now, as this fear was done away, and Fossana seemed disposed to exert all her predominating influence in my favour, I thought it best to make a virtue of necessity; and therefore consented to remain with them that night, and accompany them the next morning to Rennes, relying on their promises that I should, and the assurances of the people in the inn, that I might have a means of returning from thence to Dinant without delay. This, though a tedious procrastination, was really the most certain and most expeditious method I could have

have devised for retrieving my parole, and getting back to my poor Caroline. My heart ached for her when I thought of the anxiety she would suffer; but in my present situation, patience was my only resource.

We sat down to a tolerable supper; it was, in player's phrase, *jolly*, but not at all licentious. The company were much disposed to sing, and most of them had good voices. After entertaining me for some time really very agreeably, they requested I would, in return, give them a specimen of my musical powers.

They urged this so long and so modestly, that I was ashamed of the ingratitude of refusing the only recompense I could make for their hospitality; and with a heavy heart I complied by singing an air of one of our London Italian operas. Without accompaniment, you
may

may judge it was a poor business; but they were pleased, and next desired a sample of the music of my country. I, to give them an idea of the pathos it is capable of, obeyed by singing our popular, but ever-new and ever-charming ‘Water parted from the sea.’ They were in raptures; and as soon as I had concluded it, one of those of the troop who spoke a little French, starting up from the table, called the attention of Fossana to a proposition she had to submit to the company:—it was in substance this:

The Ambassador, whose arrival they were to wait at Rennes, they were told would be accompanied by his wife, an English lady.—I stopped the speaker to make enquiry, but she knew no more than she had related.—She proceeded to represent to Fossana that a great advantage might accrue to them all, if I could be prevailed on to remain
a few

a few days at Rennes, and then to appear on their stage for the purpose of singing this *divine air*; which, as the vehement daughter of Thespis justly observed, would be at once an agreeable surprise, a great gratification, and a polite compliment to the Ambassador's lady.

The thought was applauded, and the request made. I civilly declined complying, alledging my total unfitness for the business, and my ignorance of what was necessary to such an exhibition. I offered to write out the words and notes before I left them; but the idea was too flattering to their hopes to be given up. The sight of a *Donna Inglese* would be delightful to the Ambassador's lady, and they would not be balked.

Their solicitations grew so very clamorous, that unless I had immediately
seceded

seceded from them, and thus put it out of my power to get either backward or forward to Dinant, I could not refuse. To ease my fears and anxieties, they revolved all sorts of means of conveying intelligence of me to the place I had left; and at last, the hermaphrodite who had made the motion, undertook herself, in case the morning presented no opportunity more convenient, to walk back to Dinant, and carry to the convent a full account of me, assuring the lady abbess and Caroline, that I should be safely and speedily returned to them. To this scheme for my repose, they added a promise, that I should not be asked to appear a second night, and that they would defray every expence of my journey from Rennes to Dinant.

We waited at La Meziere all the next day for the return of the messenger.—
She faithfully executed her commission,

and brought me an affectionate billet from Caroline, full of joy at having heard of me, and another very different from the lady abbess. Notwithstanding every thing had been done that could possibly exalt the business I was destined for ; notwithstanding every thing was artfully suppressed, but the necessity of *my singing before the Ambassador's Lady*, the abbess was indignant : she threatened to write to the Commandant of St. Malo an account of my breach of parole, and positively refused to admit me again into the convent.

What could I do ? I had no means of escaping, even if I had broken my engagement with Fossana. I judged my most prudent course would be, to proceed as I had designed, and when released, to go back to St. Malo, where I could not doubt Caroline would still more readily join me, than at the convent ; and there, excusing my involuntary

tary disobedience, by a simple narrative of the ridiculous circumstance, to surrender myself to the Commandant.

Not a trace of my monastic *penchant* now remained in my mind; and considering the malignant asperity with which the abbess had written, I thought myself fortunate in having this timely proof of my error, in imagining the passions have no habitation in a nunnery.

The day was too far spent when our messenger returned, for us to proceed to Rennes: we busied ourselves in rehearsal and contrivances. I was employed to write a short address in Portuguese; and one of the instrumental performers, in practising the accompaniment of "Water parted," on the Savoyard guitar, or what we, in vulgar English style a hurdy-gurdy.

My new friends treated me infinitely better than I could have expected.— They carried about them all the Savoyard characteristics, without any mixture of Piedmontese *dexterity*. Fossana was truly charming, and so far superior to her situation, that I could not forbear asking her on this second night of our intimacy, to give me a sketch of the circumstances that had determined her to so precarious and erratic a life.— She willingly gratified my curiosity by a brief narrative, of which the following, as nearly as I can remember, is the substance.

“ I was born amongst the Alps of
“ Savoy, to a station of life so poor,
“ that my parents had no other means
“ of providing for myself and their
“ other children, than that casual method of sending us, as soon as we were
“ able to shift at all for ourselves, to
“ Turin or Naples. For this time,
“ which

“ which was to relieve them from all
“ care of me, they were impatiently
“ waiting, and had actually contracted
“ with a man to take me, with many
“ other children in the same predica-
“ ment, when an accident changed
“ their views.

“ There lived not far distant from us
“ a physician, Doctor Filippo Luppi :
“ he had, rather late in life, married a
“ woman not much younger than him-
“ self. Contrary to their expectation,
“ but much to their joy, they had one
“ child, a daughter, on whom they
“ doated to excess. — The Doctor’s
“ finances were strait : he had a prof-
“ spect of improving them by change
“ of situation, and for that purpose
“ planned a removal into France. Fear-
“ ful, however, of relinquishing a small
“ certainty for a contingent advantage,
“ he determined to make an experiment
“ of a year’s abode at Marseilles, whi-

“ther he was invited, and, if he succeeded, then to sell his little Savoyard property, and settle with his wife and child at his new residence. His hopes at Marseilles were frustrated; but at Paris he was taught to believe he might find practice in his profession; and thither at the end of the year, he went, persuaded another twelve months would be more propitious. There too he failed; and was then deluded to Geneva, whence he returned home after a waste of four years, quite dispirited.”

“Soon after his departure his daughter, then six years old, died. The grief of the mother was increased by what she knew her husband would feel, and by fear that he might impute the child’s death to want of care or skill on her part. She therefore forbore informing him of the disaster; and keeping it a secret in the neighbourhood,

“ hood, she looked out amongst the
“ children of the peasantry, for a girl
“ which she might pass on him as his
“ own. I happened to suit her pur-
“ pose; I was of the age, stature, and
“ complexion of the deceased ; and she
“ hoped by the pains she meant to be-
“ stow, to fit me for the station I was
“ elected to. Making my mother her
“ confidante, she accomplished an ex-
“ change of her dead child for a living
“ one : the Doctor’s long absence fa-
“ voured her design ; and when he re-
“ turned he was completely deceived.

“ I, all this time, had been enjoying
“ a state of comparative luxury ; and
“ had almost forgotten the chance
“ that had so favoured me. I was en-
“ trusted with the secret, and so well
“ convinced of its importance to my
“ interests, that I facilitated all my
“ adopted mother’s plans. But shortly
“ after the good Doctor’s return, she

“ found herself overwhelmed with the
“ favours of heaven : she had a farther
“ promise of offspring ; and now I was
“ an incumbrance, as the charge of
“ two children was more than they
“ could easily bear ; and she began to
“ withdraw the affection she had cen-
“ tered in me, and transfer it to the in-
“ fant expected.

“ She, however, with becoming pru-
“ dence waited the event ; and the
“ blessing proving a female, she heroi-
“ cally determined to lessen the anxiety
“ which diminished her husband’s pa-
“ rental transports, by divulging the
“ secret. No sooner was it resolved on
“ than it was executed ; and no sooner
“ was it executed than I was stripped
“ of every superfluity, clad again in
“ becoming fordidness, and turned from
“ their door, to find the forgotten way
“ to my father’s.

“ I

“ I was then in my eleventh year, and consequently demanded an increased expence. My parents, poor as they were, received me with pity and fondness; but I soon saw, that however their love disguised it, they were at the utmost difficulty to maintain themselves and me. To turn me out again they thought barbarous: every hint therefore was suppressed; but excessive poverty is not to be veiled, and as soon as I had recovered from my disappointment, I began to wish I could eat without applying to them; and in a short time I revolved in my infant mind the possibility of obtaining an independent maintenance.

“ When I was most at a loss, a whimsical thought struck me, that to relieve our present and very urgent necessities, I might pick up a little money by the exercise of my voice, which Nature had been favourable to, and which my supposititious mother

“ had taken pains to improve. I accordingly borrowed a guitar, and one fine day strolled with it into a village. Here I drew a croud, and returned home with a sum amounting to two pauls (about one shilling sterling.) The next day I extended my walk, and was equally successful.

“ A girl of my own age, one of my intimates, was delighted with my scheme, and proposed joining to my powers her own, which were those of dancing. We set out together, were absent three days; and at our return, beside our maintenance, divided six pauls. Our gains we both carried to our parents, and in a short time our fame spread, and all the girls around us were eager to join us. We form the troop you are now with. We have continued together upwards of seven years, have increased our abilities and exhibitions; have travelled Italy, France,

“ France, and part of Germany, and
“ yearly return to our native country,
“ where we spend the summer with our
“ friends, and supply the wants of such
“ of our parents as survive. Mine are
“ yet living and in tolerable comfort.—
“ Another year would probably enable
“ me to live in quiet with them; but
“ I confess I have acquired such a habit
“ of rambling, that I prefer the life I
“ lead. Most of us have lovers at home,
“ to whom we preserve inviolable con-
“ stancy, and some, I fear, will shortly
“ quit us for domestic life; but I must
“ be more surfeited with the vivacity of
“ my profession, before I reward the
“ fidelity of my Alpine shepherd.”

Such was the narrative of Fossana:
and such was its effect on me, that I
could scarcely be displeased with an ac-
cident, however thwarting, that had
thrown me in the way of these children
of virtue and simplicity.

We removed the next morning to Rennes, and hearing that the Ambassador and his lady were expected in two days, we were fully employed. Our theatre was a large loft adjoining the inn where the important personages we expected were to fix their quarters for a day or two. They had come, we were informed, by sea from Lisbon to Quiberon; but their name I could not learn. The lady was said to be in bad health; and it was for the sake of rest for her, that they proposed stopping on their route.

The entertainment with which we were to present them was a *pasticcio*, adapted to the scope of my companions' talents. The address which I had put together in bad Portuguese, and in which the *English lady* was mentioned as a performer to be introduced, was the commencement. Fossana herself was to speak it. She had used great endeavours to pronounce it with tolerable propriety;

propriety ; but to declaim in a language not understood, and to accompany it with suitable action, was no easy task : After all her pains it was a ridiculous business. This was to be followed by my English song, which they expected would secure the favour of the Ambassador's lady to the performance that it preceded. A *buffo* dialogue, dancing, singing, and a representation of the legend of Perseus and Andromeda were to constitute the evening's amusement, in which all the unities, all verisimilitude, and all connexion, as well as common sense, were set at defiance.

On our arrival, bills were immediately distributed announcing the great event. I prevailed so far as to have all mention of *the English lady* suppressed, by alledging, that whatever I could do, was intended not for the general audience, to whom it would be unintelligible,

ble, but solely as a compliment to the Ambassador's lady!

Orders for places were poured in on us; and I found Fossana stood high in reputation even here. Curiosity to see the illustrious foreigners, had certainly a share in filling the house; for by the time they arrived at Rennes, not a place, but that appropriated to them and their suite, was vacant.

They came to the inn, and Fossana immediately waited on them to request their patronage for the evening. She quickly obtained it; and returning to us, informed us exultingly of her success, adding that she had seen his excellency, but not his lady, and extolling to the skies the grace of his condescension. A following part of her intelligence was still more interesting to me. I had bid her enquire the Ambassador's title,

title, and she brought back word that it was—Count de Viana.

My emotion was instantly visible : I satisfied the inquisitiveness it caused, by saying I knew the Count and perhaps his lady ; for who, thought I, can it be but my weak friend Mrs. Dibart ?

In hopes I might avoid the disagreeable exhibition I was called to, by making myself known to the countess, I coaxed Fossana, with an assurance that she and her troop would sustain no injury by it, to go back again, and if possible to convey a message to the countess, informing her that an *English woman* in the inn begged leave to pay her respects to her.

Whether Fossana marred the message in delivering it, or the countess chose to forget her country, I could not discover, but the answer returned was,
that

that the Countess di Viana was indisposed and saw no company.

My only remaining hope was, that if it really was Mrs. Dibart, she would recollect me in my song, as notwithstanding her ailment, she had promised to grace our theatre. 'Tis true I could have applied to the Count, from whose generosity and politeness I had every thing to hope; but if he was married to Mrs. Dibart, I could not tell how he might be altered, or how many of her prejudices he might have adopted; and since the conversation I had overheard at Terceira, though I still retained a discriminating and very sincere regard for him, I did not think him a fit person for me to ask a favour of. Perhaps this was a little prudery, or possibly pride.

The evening came; and we repaired to the theatre. I had been furnished

with a suitable and really decent dress from the wardrobe, and I equipped myself in it. The house filled; after an hour's expectation the Count and Countess made their appearance, followed by a lady and several gentlemen. Impatient to be satisfied as to Mrs. Dibart, I peeped through the curtain. The state-box was in the centre of the front.—I instantly knew the Count: he handed a lady covered with jewels.—It was, beyond all question, Mrs. Dibart, though she was greatly altered. The audience received them with every welcome. The count bowed with the politest condescension: the lady curtsied with superior haughtiness.

I could stare no longer, for we waited only their coming. My heart failed me when I thought of my song. I turned to go behind the scenes, when by accident my foot caught in a slit in the curtain, which having been too hastily nailed

nailed up, fell to the ground. I turned again to look what I had done. I was now in full view of the audience, in which situation I stood motionless with surprise; I heard a scream, and looking where it came, I saw all eyes directed to the Ambassador's box; his attention was wholly engrossed by his lady, who I now believed had fainted at seeing me.

Scarcely myself, I withdrew behind the side-scene, where I had in a few minutes a message from the Count di Viana, desiring, if my name was Hamilton, to see me immediately. I in extreme palpitation obeyed, and was conducted to the state-box: a passage was cleared for me to the Countess. Unable to utter a word, I made an effort to take her hand: she withdrew it coldly and in silence, and covered her face with her fan. I was disconcerted at first, but soon relieved by the Count, who behaved

behaved with the utmost cordiality, and enquired by what strange chance I had been brought to Rennes.

Donna Antonia Lebida, whom I have before mentioned as her bosom friend while at Terceira, was the Countess's attendant. She seemed to think it incumbent on her to copy her principal, and but for the benevolent Count, I should have been completely discouraged. He insisted on my remaining in the box; and when I had explained my situation, he sent orders that the performance should proceed without me.

The Countess at length, perhaps ashamed of being ashamed to see me, brightened up into good-humour, and condescended to answer my repeated expressions of joy at meeting her, by accounts of her own ill health, which if her looks were to be trusted, she did
not

not exaggerate. After a short time we grew sociable, Donna Antonia obsequiously veered as the Countess veered; and at the conclusion of the entertainment, I had accepted the Count's valuable offer of protection. Fossana came in to pay her compliments, and express her hopes of success in her endeavours to please her illustrious auditors. The Count gave her a purse of pistoles for her performance, and another as a reward for her conduct to me. I retired with her to undress; she parted from me reluctantly; and I quitted the theatre with the Ambassador's suite.

Perhaps the Countess had at first feared my reproaches. I am inclined to think so, because she was very earnest to hide what was 'confirmation strong' to me, as to one instance of her condescension, a crucifix which hung from her neck, and was set with very fine brilliants.

brilliant. After our meeting perturbations were over, she was not at all deficient in expressions of kindness. We passed a cheerful evening, in which I gave a brief account of my unintentional visit to the Gallic coast.

I found the Countess not at all disposed to advert to the past, or to satisfy my curiosity as to events after I parted from her at Terceira. As if to stop my tongue, she overwhelmed me with fondness; but the Count, who had less strong motives for concealment, and who judged I should like the chasm in my friend's history to be filled up, gratified me by saying he had, soon after my leaving the island, obtained leave to return to Portugal for a time, and had escorted Mrs. Dibart thither: that when there, he solicited the King's permission to marry her, who, in consideration of his former disappointment, and on condition she became reconciled to the national

national church, had condescended to his request: that the Countess disliking to return to Terceira, he had resigned his post, and till this embassy, had continued in Portugal.

I thanked the Count for his communication, and enquired after my good friends Donna Isabella de Vidos, her daughter, and Don Carlos Riva. The Countess's reply was a compliment to my vanity, which I could well have spared: she said she never saw them; for they affected to resent *my leaving her* at Terceira. I understood this expression, though not quite correct. The Count informed me he saw them frequently, had left them all in health and happiness when he took leave of them; and had been charged by them with particular instructions to seek me at Lady Jane Alderway's, in case he visited England as he proposed.

When

When my inquisitiveness was satisfied, my future destination was to be discussed. The Count and his Lady wished me to accompany them to Versailles : but to this my parole, and poor Caroline, who must now be in hourly expectation of my return, or tortured with fear lest I should obey the lady abbess's cruel injunction and abandon her, were obstacles. These were soon obviated, where so much willingness and power existed ; for the Count next morning dispatched a messenger to St. Malo, with a request to the Commandant that Mrs. Smith, her children and servant might be liberated and escorted to Rennes, or embarked to England, as they thought proper ; and that I, who had unintentionally left Dinant, and was ready to return to it if required, might be no longer considered a prisoner.

The answer returned was, that by a cartel Mrs. Smith, her children, and
servant,

servant, had been exchanged : that they had had every possible attention paid them, and had sailed for England a few hours before the messenger's arrival. That Mrs. Smith had departed very reluctantly without me; but that the commandant had satisfied her by keeping a vacancy for me, and assuring her he would forward me to her as soon as I returned. The request with respect to me, was granted in the handsomest terms, and I now gladly accepted the Count's pressing invitation to attach myself to his suite.

My first business after I heard of my liberation, was to write to Mr. Holmes; and this duty dispatched, I with a less heavy heart set forward in the Ambassador's coach, and dressed in his lady's cloaths, for Paris.—While at Rennes, the Countess and her dear friend Donna Antonia Lebida, differed in opinion on some trivial occasion; and I believe the

the disgust of the latter was increased by dislike to me. A cloud sat on her brow, and we had not proceeded far on our route, when they came to high words, and Donna Antonia muttered a wish that ~~she~~ she was at home again. The Countess was not deaf to what perhaps she concurred in: their heart-burning increased, and without the interference of either the Count or myself, but to my very great joy, the artful disappointed Portuguese declined accompanying the Countess any farther. The foibles not only of Mrs. Dibart but of her friends were generally a tax on her husband for the time being: the Count had to defray her expences back to Lisbon, on receiving which ~~she~~ she sat out for Spa, a part of the terraqueous globe to which her character, her inclinations, and abilities, were certainly happily suited.

If splendor and respect contribute to
H happiness,

happiness, our's was a happy journey, but I felt much greater pleasure in being with my old friend to whom mutual misfortune had closely rivetted my affection in spite of her ill usage to me, and to whom I felt myself sincerely attached; and with the Count whose uniform kindness to me, and generous hospitality at Terceira, bound me to him much by the ties of gratitude, as his estimable qualities did by those of respect. Our route lay through a corner of Maine and the lower part of Normandy, and by short journeys, accommodated to the Countess's ill state of health, we reached Paris in a week. Here her spirits revived and she mended daily: she could partake of the amusements and honours prepared for his faithful Majesty's minister, and by their friendly munificence I was enabled to share their pleasure; but gaiety was agony to me, and I declined it as often as possible. Their regard towards me, and
their

their introduction of me, drew great attention, and I might have chosen my situation amongst many gentlemen of rank, and of my own country; but my subsisting marriage was not a greater obstacle than my undiminished attachment to the memory of Mr. Cyril, whose image and whose hard fate rose to my view and recollection, sleeping and waking.

At length the Count, who saw and disapproved the repelling coldness with which I received the unmerited and flattering homage paid me, insisted upon exercising the authority my acceptance of his protection gave him. He urged the folly of resolutions of celibacy, and pleaded hard for a young man of family, fortune, and consideration in our own country, and who had engaged him in his interest. I excused myself by professing indifference to all the world, and disinclination to change

H 2 my

my situation; but the Count di Viana bred up in a court, and by experience a judge of human nature, was not to be put off with general and vague professions: he said, my situation was too defenceless and precarious to be at all desirable, and he was certain from his observation of me, that I was not the frigid creature I would make him believe me. He avowed his suspicion that I had some secret attachment, and while he lamented the want of power a foreigner laboured under, he offered me all his interest and influence, if I or the person he supposed me attached to, could make them serviceable to our union.

The Countess was present when he thus generously encouraged me; and warmed as my heart was by his kindness, and her assurances that she was no less earnest for my comfortable establishment in the world and willing to promote

mote it, I for the first time since I threw by my usurped coronet, voluntarily divested myself of all reserve, and begging their patience, gave them, as far as my memory would serve, a narrative of all my hopes and disappointments, follies and mortifications, former miseries and present sufferings, omitting only the circumstance of Captain Dibart's passion for me, which I feared might hurt his relict's pride.

Prudence had its share in inducing me to this revelation. The business with which the Count was charged, would detain him but a few weeks in Paris. He had permission from his court then to visit England for the purpose of the Countess's settling her former husband's affairs. I found myself, before I left London, too well known to hope for farther concealment; and it would have been highly improper to

have risked their hearing my origin from another quarter.

The reception my melancholy story met with, gave me no reason to repent my frankness. The Count re-affured me of his protection, and the Countess of her unalterable love for me. They concurred in advising me to act in my own character, as the only means of depressing hopes I could not gratify, and to assume, not the name of Linfield, which I did not despair of renouncing at one time or other, but my family name of Macgilroy, which without any addition sufficiently explained my situation to all of my own country.

Every particle of the respect due to the Ambassador of a crowned head, was necessary to counterbalance the painful curiosity my avowal and the Count's distinction of me excited. To see *me*, who but a short time before was in a station

station hardly above that of servitude; was now an object of importance with all the idle English: it called forth all I had ever been acquainted with to visit me, and procured me sometimes gratifying but oftener mortifying attentions.

The best accounts of Mr. Holmes, Caroline, and her family, not forgetting George Tims, cheered my spirits; and the bustle of Paris and Versailles was rendered just tolerable to me by my receiving from Mrs. Agthorpe, to whom I now with some confidence had written a request to know the situation of my dear Mrs. Semhurst, a very civil and almost cordial letter, expressing hopes of her mother's perfect recovery at some future time.—I could not but say to myself when I re-perused this letter, ah Madam! how many changes of fortune would you have spared me, had you been *really* as kind to *Mary Hamil-*

ton at a paltry country inn, as you now profess yourself to *Miss Macgilroy* at the Portuguese Ambassador's in Paris ! yet the one has no greater claim to your regard than the other—both are equally guilty of your brother's death !

After a stay of about two months in the gayest metropolis in the world, but whose pleasures were ill-suited to my taste, we began to prepare for coming to England ; and attracted by the hopes of seeing my dear friends in Devonshire, I was counting the hours till our departure, when my present galling enjoyments were rendered insupportable torments, by my discovering that I was in the vicinity of a gentleman who had it in his power, if it was in his inclination, to make me tremble.

My grief for Mr. Cyril might be suspended, but could not be effaced from
my

my mind; and I had effectually pleaded it as an excuse for not joining my kind friends in their gayer amusements from home. Finding I really abhorred the idea of shew and glitter, under my well-founded dejection, they excused me from appearing in public every where, but at their hotel; and there they convinced me of the propriety of my shewing myself, if I meant to avail myself of their countenance. In compliment to the Countess, all the English attended their public days; and on the last before our leaving Paris, who should come in, late in the evening, but Sir Luson Linfield, whom I imagined at that time in a very safe habitation in his own country?

I contrived to avoid him for some time, that I might watch his behaviour. I gave the Count and Countess a proper hint; and ~~she~~ took advantage of her situation to question him for my satisfaction.

tisfaction. She learnt that he had arrived but the day before : he assumed the ease and important air of a gentleman travelling for pleasure, and sat down to a card-table, where I had an opportunity of observing him, and was astonished to find him not only play for a considerable stake, but betting like a madman against the greatest odds.—The Count, provoked at his folly, was determined to put a stop to it, and at the same time to do, what he thought, might be of future service to me. He led me up to him, and asked him if he knew me. He replied boldly in the negative.—His Excellency then named me to him.—He repeated the name, and protested that, if he had ever heard it before, it had entirely escaped his memory.

Well as I ought to have been acquainted with Sir Luson Linfield by this time, I was so astonished at his effrontery,

frontery, that I had not power to speak, and retiring in the utmost confusion from the company, I felt my distress immeasurably aggravated by fear that the Count and Countess must immediately judge me an impostor, and discard me for ever from their regard.

I was not quite deceived in those painful apprehensions. A change in her, whose nature no alteration in rank or situation in life could change, was presently visible; and I saw that, notwithstanding her husband's unvaried purpose of conducting me in safety to England, my journey with her would be intolerable, even if she permitted it, unless her humour underwent another revolution. In the morning of the succeeding day she was cold and pettish, and at noon insupportably unkind; but, soon after, all was set right again, by the inconsistency of a being only less uni-

formly inconsistent than herself. I had then the following billet from Sir Luson :

“ My dearest Madam,

“ I am grieved at the falsity I was
“ distressed into last night. What
“ could I do ? It would have been ruin
“ to me at that moment to have owned
“ you. Let this repair my ungrateful
“ error, and while it acknowledges
“ your unmerited goodness to me, let
“ it reinstate me in your regard.

“ I heard from Mrs. Smith of your
“ separation from her. She is with her
“ father, and I hope happy. Lord
“ Cheston has abated nothing of his
“ obduracy; but my other creditors
“ have paid off his debt, and have
“ agreed to allow me one hundred and
“ fifty pounds a year, while I remain
“ abroad. I was last night so success-
“ ful

“ful that I shall continue here a few
“weeks, and then seek some agreeable
“place to retire to.

“You have no reason to fear the
“least disturbance from me : you know
“the height of my ambition is the re-
“possession of Caroline. The only
“atonement I can make for my late
“failure in what I owe you is, my ac-
“knowledging that I am

“Your very unworthy husband,

“LUSON LINFIELD.”

So much for Sir Luson Linfield ; a
hero, whose duplicity was ever present-
ing novelties, and with whom, I am
happy to say, I never was thoroughly
acquainted. His scandalous recanta-
tion of an infamous falsehood was,
however, a considerable obligation in
my circumstances. The Countess re-
stored me to her credit and favour ; and
her

her more steady husband was prevailed on, by my intreaties, to let the matter sink into oblivion, and to hasten our setting forward for England.

We began our journey auspiciously ; but no sooner had we lost sight of the French metropolis, than the demon of *ennui* again visited the Countess, and the inborn propensity getting the better of all opposition, she became as jealous of me and her present husband as of her former. The Count di Viana and Captain Dibart, were, however, distinct and different personages ; and she had met with a man now, who knew that compliance is not always the best method of obtaining either peace or gratitude, and who would not humour the whimsical self-tormentor. He treated her as every woman of sense would wish to be treated, with all possible humanity and affection ; but not one concession would he make to foster folly. When he perceived her
uneasiness

uneasiness on my account, for really it was too glaring to be complimented with affected blindness or to be mistaken, he, when we were both present, warned her against indulging so fatal an error. "My conduct to you, Madam," said he, "is above all suspicion. I live in public; I account satisfactorily for every hour of my time. I have no attachments but those of friendship, gratitude, and universal charity; and I assure you, so little am I disposed to disturb the enjoyments of others, that if you chuse to amuse yourself in your journey, by fancying an amour, I shall not in the least vary my conduct to undeceive you."

All the Countess's languid vehemence was brought forward to reply to this cruelty; but not a word could she force from her husband, who, I am sure, at that moment bitterly repenting the predicament her now extinct passion had reduced

reduced him to, left her to the free indulgence of her weakness. She then, exactly like my old friend Mrs. Dibart, had recourse to tears and protestations, during the remainder of the journey was extremely indisposed, and whenever the Count was absent, entertained me with prophecies, that she should not live long, which I own was highly probable; and that the romance of my life would conclude by the Count's obtaining a divorce for me, and making me his wife, which I thought far less probable.

We crossed at Calais, and finding it impossible to bear her ill humour without encreasing it, I determined to burden her no farther than to Dover. The Count yielded to my representations, and obligingly postponed his departure for London, till Mr. Holmes could come out of Devonshire to fetch me. He then delivered me into his care, and
under

under a prepossession that I should never see the Countess again, we parted from her and her amiable husband, who but for her might have gone to his grave an example to the whole world.

Good old Mr. Holmes, my more than father, was overwhelmed with joy at sight of me ; and we soon reached his house. Here I was received in the most affectionate manner by Mrs. Holmes, and with rapture by Caroline, who had not yet taken possession of our charming retreat.

I was carried to see this temple of peace my kind friend had prepared for me. It was a cottage, not a quarter of a mile from his house, perfectly simple in its external appearance, perfectly neat and convenient within, and beautifully situated on a gentle declivity, the foot of which was washed by a small stream

stream. Here, said I to myself, shall I at last find the repose I have so long sought and been balked of.—Nothing shall allure me hence.—Nothing can here disturb me.—Here will I spend my days, with Cyril's image ever present to my view, and wait the happy hour when I shall be called to join his spirit in a life I will diligently prepare myself to deserve.

In a fortnight we became its tenants : the summer yet retained the gloss of spring, and I felt tranquil if not happy.

My kind attentive Lady Donachmuir, to whom I had written from Paris, anticipating my year's annuity had rendered my pecuniary situation easy ; and now that I seemed to have settled accounts with the world, I could not but confess, that the cruelty I had experienced from those on whom I had
claims

claims, was more than counterbalanced by the voluntary friendship I had met with in strangers.

We lived in peace and comfort till autumn—Report said that foolish Sir Luson Linfield, in company with crafty Slarrow, was squandering his annuity still at Paris, where he affected, and was now and then enabled by success at play, to live *in style*. Caroline, in her correspondence with him, reproached him with this indiscretion, and I believe at the time was so hurt by the depravity of his conduct, that she could have renounced him for ever; but he penitently excused his follies by saying, they were the entire consequence of his exile from her. Would her father permit her to come to him, he would retire into any obscurity: he would conform to the strictest domestic regularity, and would remit his purse and his conduct

duct wholly to her guidance, preferring poverty with her to affluence without her.

This cordial wish, though not then to be complied with, restored him to his place in Caroline's heart, and produced a great degree of melancholy in her.— I more than ever longed to annul my marriage to which one object was partly removed by a legal opinion Mr. Holmes had obtained. But law proceedings are expensive; and not one of us, nor all together, could defray the expence we must incur if once we engaged.

When our hopes were at the lowest ebb, and we were sitting down in silent acquiescence, an unforeseen accident roused us. The Countess di Viana's bodily frame proved too weak for the mental agitation she wore it with. In September she died; and by a will she had

had the power of making, she bequeathed me the sum of three thousand pounds.

Much of my sorrows as I owed to the unfortunate temper of this friend, and forced as I had been by a regard for peace to withdraw myself from her, the catastrophe of her life shocked me, and I sincerely lamented her. There is something in long standing or very intimate connexions, that unites itself so inseparably with the heart, that the privation of ill by its removal cannot compensate for the pain the sudden plucking it away causes. There are charms in almost every thing one is accustomed to; and when I heard of the Countess di Viana's death, I thought I could better have endured her teasing me through life.

My first care after the receipt of my generous and unlooked-for legacy, was to reimburse Lady Donachmuir the sums

sums she had remitted me at different times since the blowing up of my bubble honours ; and next, I turned my attention towards my own emancipation. We now could safely venture into *the bottomless pit*, and measures were, without delay, taken to undo, at an expence of probably some months and some hundreds of pounds, what half an hour and five guineas had done.

We employed persons of probity ; and their opinions encouraged us. We stated as our case, that Sir Luson Linfield had married me under the idea of my being Countess of Donachmuir, that finding himself disappointed by the production of an heir to my late uncle, he considered the marriage as null, and that I joined in praying to have it declared so. This was first to be carried in Scotland ; and by dint of paying well, we got the business expedited ; and it was concluded in our fa-

your

your. Our next application was, for my sake, to the civilians of Doctors' Commons; and here also we were separated to our hearts content. Nothing now remained, but the last appeal to the supreme legislature of the kingdom: they were sitting at the time, we had very good interest to get attention, and not a doubt was entertained of our success. We spent our money liberally, and chearfully, and I was in view of emancipation—useless emancipation to me! since he who alone could give value to the clause empowering me to marry again, had in the rashness of disappointment and despair torn himself from me.

It was intended amongst us, that as soon as the bill was passed, Mr. Holmes should take his daughter to Brussels, whither Sir Luson had now retreated, and where Mr. Holmes agreed to allow them a sum equal to Sir Luson's annuity

nunity, on condition they remained there and lived with propriety. I was then to take up my abode at Mr. Holmes's.

My legal anxieties neither blunted my memory nor diminished my melancholy. The retirement of the country, though congenial to my wishes, and the decaying season of the year, seemed to have rooted my sorrows in my mind. Mrs. Semhurst's precarious but not hopeless situation, prevented my sinking so quietly into despondency as I wished: it tortured me, and for the relief of my mind I again wrote to Mrs. Agthorpe, who in a style of civility *fitly lowered* to my again depressed situation, after a considerable delay, deigned to reply to me by just saying her mother was better; and by desiring, that if I wanted information again I would write to her housekeeper, as she herself was in an ill state

state of health, and could not take the trouble of answering my letters.

I cared little for Mrs. Agthorpe's brutal rudeness; and had it been ten times greater, the intelligence that my dear Mrs. Semhurst was better, would have reconciled me to it. Mr. Holmes very properly and humanely improved the little rise this news gave my spirits, by exhorting me so to fortify my mind, that I might add Mrs. Semhurst's occasional society to my other comforts, if, as he did not doubt, her love for me returned with the perfect use of her faculties.

Could one imagine, my dear Lady Catherine, that low as I had built my temple of peace, securely as I thought I had propped it, and durable as were its materials, it was yet under the capricious influence of the gales of Fortune? Yet so it was; for by an event which

under some circumstances would have crowned me with felicity, all our designs were entirely frustrated.

The infant Earl of Donachmuir died ; and I, the foot-ball, the sport, the laughing-stock of Chance, became instantly possessed of his titles and his wealth !!!—His afflicted mother, even in her deepest sorrow, was consoled by her own amiable mind, which turned into comfort the consideration that one to whom she was so sincerely attached, and who had experienced so much adversity, would reap advantage from her misfortune. She behaved on this occasion, as on all others, with the strictest honour and astonishing propriety. She immediately made over to me all that had devolved to me, which amounted, beside an undiminished income of seven thousand pounds a year, to near fifty thousand pounds in personal property and savings, all which my uncle's will, which

which I was now very careful to examine, had bequeathed to me in case his son died under age.

This stupendous good fortune I should have accepted more gratefully, had it been postponed a few months.— Our petition to parliament for a divorce was yet in a very early stage: the probability of its failure was hinted to me, and a reference to a very high authority brought me the unwelcome opinion, that we had better desist from squandering our money, for that as I was now what Sir Luson married me for, we had on our alleged ground no plea for a divorce.

But reduced as were my expectations, I was now too desperate to be advised;—

“ Stept in so far, that, should I wade no more,

“ Returning were as tedious as going o’er.”

I was determined to fight the ground

inch by inch, rather than remain, even in idea, the wife of a man whom, with all the virtues I could attribute to him, I despised ; or form such a bar to his union with Caroline. I cared not what opinion the public entertained of my attempt, if the lawgivers of my country would but set me free.

All Sir Luson's letters to Caroline breathed such a spirit of sincere attachment, that we thought it but common charity to transmit to him, with this unpleasing intelligence, whatever could soften it ; and I therefore myself comforted him with vows of perseverance to the utmost. How do you think he received them ? The wretch, so abject in adversity, was rendered insolent by the hope of better fortune.—But his own reply to me will best speak for him.

“ My

“ My dear Madam,

“ I am infinitely indebted to your
“ goodness for the expressions of regard
“ I have this day received from you, and
“ sincerely congratulate you on your
“ noble acquisitions ; but it is necessary
“ you should be immediately apprised
“ of my sentiments, which I am sorry
“ to find differ materially from your's.

“ The opinion you have obtained, re-
“ specting the success of our application
“ to parliament, is certainly founded
“ in good sense and reason ; and I can-
“ not but join in advising you to stop
“ the proceedings, as I will not de-
“ ceive you so far, as to promise you
“ my concurrence. On the contrary,
“ I shall certainly now oppose every
“ measure for a divorce.

“ This you will, perhaps, at first

“ blame ; but a little consideration will
“ convince you of the justice and pro-
“ priety of my resolution. Nothing
“ but your being deprived of what you
“ now possess, separated me from you :
“ it is restored to you, and therefore
“ I gladly claim you, and shall insist
“ on your annulling our partial divorce
“ by a fresh marriage.

“ Mrs. Smith has, I am convinced,
“ too much good sense to expect me to
“ act otherwise in such circumstances.
“ The narrowness of our income, were
“ she and I to come together, and the
“ exile I must live in, would be an eter-
“ nal bar to our happiness. I will
“ make her any settlement her friends
“ and you judge proper ; and she has
“ my free leave to bestow her hand and
“ affections where she pleases.

“ I shall be in England very shortly,
“ and shall immediately take the neces-
“ sary

“fary steps for what I propose. Till
“then, I have the honour to subscribe
“myself

“Your very affectionate husband,

“LUSON LINFIELD.”

A conduct so much worse than brutal, surprised even me ; and it was within a very little fatal to Caroline, whom nothing supported but the kindness of her parents, and my re-iterated promise, that I would not only never acknowledge myself Sir Luson's wife, but would rather see all I was become heiress to, spent in the courts of law, than cease my endeavours to shake him off. But this promise soon lost all its power with her ; for when the first shock was over, and she thought coolly on the subject, she saw nothing was to be hoped for from so worthless a being ; and as his

marriage with her must be at best a marriage of compulsion, the prospect before her was dreadful. She considered that it could not relieve her or her children from the ignominy he had involved them in. Such repeated ill-usage substituted resentment in the place of affection, even in her gentle mind. She was justly incensed against Sir Luson; she discarded him entirely from her heart; and exerting herself most commendably, she gained a complete victory over her attachment, and regarded him as a forgiven enemy, and a person entitled only to her pity.

One effort more I determined for my own sake to make against my opponent. I offered him the half of every thing I possessed to relinquish me for ever; but this offer never reached him; he had left Brussels, and landed at Harwich from Ostend, where he was stopped by an accident,

accident, I must go a little way back to explain to you.

During my last absence from England, Lord Cheston, finding his own affairs on the wane, had, as a desperate remedy, made overtures to Lady Jane Alderway's ponderous purse; but as these overtures must of necessity include her person, he was forced to offer his hand and coronet. To these the lady had no immoveable aversion, but either her tenaciousness of reputation, or a spirit of revenge, prompted her to require his Lordship to win her, by proving his valour in arms against her recreant knight. In short, he must challenge Sir Luson Linfield, and fight him in whatever part of Christendom he was to be found, or she would never reward his passion.

For this *laudable* purpose his Lordship, having learnt where his enemy was, and laid in great store of weapons and

ammunition, set off for Harwich, meaning to embark for Ostend. He was waiting for a wind when Sir Luson arrived: he heard of his landing: like a faithful avenger of injured innocence, he challenged the perfidious man, and by shooting him through the body and leaving him for dead on the field of battle, he performed the prescribed conditions. His Lordship then embarked privately at another port, which he was lucky enough to reach in spite of the officers of justice, and when in safety on the continent, Lady Jane, the rigid decorous Lady Jane, followed and married him.

Highly as I was interested in this event, and advantageous as it was to my peace of mind, it brought with it painful sensations, and strongly reminded me of those words of the royal Dane—

- * Cut off even in the blossoms of my fin—
- * No reck'ning made, but sent to my account
- * With all my imperfections on my head.'

What would I not have given for a seven years space for repentance for poor foolish unprincipled Sir Luson Linfield?

Having settled a fit plan of life for myself, which included every thing but a tranquil mind, and left as I thought nothing to chance, I entered on it fully determined on celibacy. My elevated situation, and the port it behoved me to maintain, drew me splendid offers, which without the least regret I rejected, wishing all the world to know my resolution. I was urged, I was laughed at; but all in vain. Time did not at all efface the gloomy impresson I had received. Mr. Cyril owed his death to me, and the least return I could make to his memory, was constant attachment.

Though I had vowed celibacy, I was not formed for solitude; I had taken a house in Mr. Holmes's neighbourhood, and was happy in the friendship and society of his family.—To every one of those who had been kind to me in my misfortunes, I wrote, requesting the continuance of their regard, particularly to the lady in Arlington-street, whom I have mentioned as my casual introduction to Mrs. Semhurst. Lady Donachmuir, to whom a life-interest in the Perthshire estate and an additional five-hundred a year, reverted on her son's death, was prevailed on to come to me for a time, and I had the pleasure of contributing to remove her melancholy. These smiles of fortune were rendered still more welcome by a short letter from Mrs. Semhurst, written with her own hand, in which she informed me of what for her sake I was sorry to learn, the death of Mrs. Agthorpe. The shock of this new calamity had roused her from her temporary insanity, and she assured

fured me of her daily amendment, and unalterable affection.

In my present situation I judged some return of attention due to the Count di Viana, who was still in London; but this was a delicate business. I did not care to risque a completion of the Countess's prophecy, by inviting him to a *tête-à-tête visit* at my house; and yet I wished for an opportunity of testifying my regard. Accident befriended me in this juncture. He wrote to me that my kind Portuguese friends, Don Carlos and Donna Emilia Riva, proposed a visit to England in the ensuing spring, and were desirous of seeing me. I answered this pleasing news, by requesting the Count, in my name, to invite them into Devonshire, and to accompany them. In this I was gratified, and had the happiness of entertaining these illustrious benefactors to me.

I had

I had enjoyed the company of my valued friends but a few weeks, when a wonderful alteration took place in our elegant Portuguese Count. Lady Donachmuir was still with me, amiable as ever, and lovely as ever. To her I looked for an explanation, and soon received it. Finding himself discovered, he avowed his attachment to her; he had advocates in us all; for it was a match to which, as their religious opinions were the same, and he was disposed to divide his time between his own country and this, no objection could be made. We all wooed his lady for him, and their marriage was solemnized under my roof.

But Fortune, desirous of shewing me once more that there is no fortification of happiness that can resist her attacks, or willing to teach me not to confide either in riches or honours, or even friends, for security; soon after this event

event set her machinations again in motion, and blew up all my aërial schemes of quiet and comfort.

Soon after his marriage the Count began to bend his thoughts towards leaving England, as did Don Carlos and Donna Emilia. Poor Lady Donachmuir, pleased as she confessed herself with her new situation, could not however get over a natural reluctance to going with persons who were foreigners to her into a foreign country, without some female friend whose language was her own. She herself had, in her retirement, by the most commendable application, attained a competent knowledge of most of the European languages; and could converse with her husband and his friends, with little or no difficulty; but still she sighed for an English companion, and in our conversations on the subject, was so particular in the requisite qualifications of this English friend, that

that I was at no loss to discover that she would be satisfied with no one but myself. Affection for her, and gratitude for her unexampled kindness to me, through the whole series of my misfortunes, demanded on my part every compliance she could ask. But this was a nice point to adjust so as to please every one who had claims on me,— With respect to myself, I had no objection to the undertaking a voyage to Portugal, or a journey through the Netherlands and France, which was the route the Count's affairs prompted him to. To see Donna Isabella de Vidos, who remained in Lisbon, was a gratification that, in my idea, would have amply rewarded greater toil; but how would Mr. and Mrs. Holmes, whom I really obeyed as a daughter, and how would my dear Caroline Smith, whom I loved with more than sisterly attachment, brook my absence? It behoved me to try what could be done for Lady
Donachmuir

Donachmuir without pain to others. I broke the matter to Mr. Holmes; he acquiesced in the propriety of my indulging such a friend; he prevailed on his wife and daughter to submit; and I gave Lady Donachmuir my promise that I would accompany her.

It was the Count's plan, as I have said, to go through France, to winter at Lisbon, and, unless prevented by accidents, to return to England, to which he grew more and more attached, and where his first Countess had bequeathed him considerable property. Our stay consequently would not exceed three quarters of a year; and for that time I persuaded Mr. and Mrs. Holmes, with Caroline and her family, to remove into my house.

Before I quitted the country, I had the satisfaction of finding Mrs. Smith perfectly reconciled to my going, on condition

condition of my frequent correspondence; and I obtained an equal and more unexpected gratification: for Mrs. Semhurst, my dear Mrs. Semhurst not only wrote me the best accounts of her health, but actually made me a visit of a fortnight, and promised to repeat it on my return. Her strength of mind, and pious resignation to the afflicting chastisements of Heaven, were of infinite service to me in the establishment of my tranquillity. I told her every thing that had occurred after my quitting her; but she had nothing to inform me of in return; her existence for that time had been nearly a blank space.

At the time proposed, that is to say in the month of August, the Count di Viana, his lady, Don Carlos, and Donna Emilia, with George Tims, whom I still retain, and a train suited to our respective rank, embarked for Sluys, intending
to

to pass through Bruges, Ghent, Dendremonde, and Vilvoerden to Brussels, where we were to make a short stay. All this we accomplished as we wished. I gave the tribute of a sigh to the memory of poor misguided Sir Luson Linfield as I entered the place, where we found such a reception as was calculated to banish all gloom; every one, of what country soever, seeming desirous to shew respect to the well-known Count di Viana, and the two English ladies.

Brussels, if it were not rendered by its temporary inhabitants, and particularly the English, the sink of Europe, would be a most charming residence. Lady Donachmuir, whom hereafter I shall style, as she now out of deference to her husband styles herself, Countess di Viana, was so delighted with it, that our stay was a little prolonged to please her. I wrote to my dear friends in Devonshire, and to Mrs. Semhurst, the
best

best tidings of our enjoyments; and flattered myself that I should be indebted to the Countess di Viana's wish I should accompany her, for a renovated stock of health and spirits. I ought at the time to have recollected, that never in my life did I feel that flush of hope without its being followed by some calamity: such a reflection would duly have checked my exultation, and prepared me for what soon followed.

One day at noon my two female friends and myself went to enjoy the first pleasant day September had produced us, in a walk about the park which has been so much talked of by all English visitors to Brussels. Our apartments opened into it; we therefore could go unattended but by servants. We had walked but a little way when our compassion was excited by seeing a gentlemanly though rather shabby looking man getting

getting along on crutches. He appeared a sick Englishman.

A fellow-countryman abroad, is more than a brother at home.—I looked at, and sincerely pitied him : he too gazed, and I thought I saw him change colour as he withdrew his eyes; but still I regarded him as a stranger. We continued our walk, thought little more of him, and returned home.

In the evening of this day the English mail came in : it brought me a large packet of joys, as I ever esteemed letters from home; but who could have imagined the extent of those joys at this moment ?

First I opened and read a very cordial letter from Mr. Holmes, giving me an account of all my interests which I had committed to his charge, then an overflowing sheet from Caroline, written
in

in uncommon good spirits : her children had been sick, and were got well ;—one talked, two walked, and all could fight and make a noise.—She at the moment of writing, seemed to enjoy all a mother's pleasures free from a mother's cares—a short and therefore valuable respite from the lot of humanity !

Next I broke the seal of a letter of uncommon thickness, which the handwriting told me was from Mrs. Semhurst. Her sheet inclosed another, directed also by her own hand.—The contents of both I will give you, and of the *envelope* first.

“ My dearest child,

“ How grieved I should be at your
“ absence at this crisis, did I not fear
“ you could scarcely bear with your
“ usual equanimity, what I should not
“ have

“ have prudence enough to tell you
“ discreetly. Let me intreat you to
“ postpone opening the inclosed till you
“ have prepared your mind for the
“ greatest shock I know it can receive.
“ —You will find no signature to it—
“ it was omitted lest surprise should
“ overcome you. — I can only say, I
“ am, with all the affection of a mo-
“ ther, and all possible respect for such
“ a daughter,

“ Ever your’s,

“ ANN SEMHURST,”

I think, my dear Lady Catherine, I ought to warn you against surprise before I treat you with the inner letter; but though you, I am sure, enter into all my joys and sorrows, with the utmost intimacy of friendship, you cannot feel what I did at the moment. Yet

I had

I had so much prudence as to follow Mrs. Semhurst's advice; and I begged the Countess di Viana from whom I withheld nothing, to stay by me and to open this important epistle, and to communicate its contents cautiously to me.

She read it to herself. I saw its wonderful effect on her, and was ready to snatch it from her hand. Instant death I thought preferable to the suspense I was punished with, but she did not long tantalize me.—Thrown entirely off her guard herself by her sympathy in whatever concerned me, she had not concluded her perusal of the letter, when she cried out suddenly—"Mr. Cyril's
"alive!"

Had I given credit to this assertion, I think you would have been spared the trouble of reading this narrative: I must have died on the spot.—I replied,

as I

as I believed, that it was impossible ; and persuaded that the letter was less important than Mrs. Semhurst had imagined it, I took it from the Countess. The hand was indisputably Mr. Cyril's, and my spirits served me to read it to the end. A copy will perhaps please you better than an abstract.

“ I sit down trembling to address her,
“ whom I can scarcely yet believe I
“ have a right to think on—but mine
“ is not the tremour of fear : it is that
“ of hope and joy—for I am bid to
“ hope and be confident, that I shall
“ not be charged with presumption.

“ How shall I veil myself so as to
“ save you from the effects of surprise?
“ —How shall I tell you you have been
“ led into a mistake concerning the
“ death of a friend of yours?—Per-
“ haps my fears proceed from vanity
VOL. III. K “ —I should

“ —I should think so, and throw off all
“ caution ; but that I still remember you
“ once assured me of your regard, and
“ I believe you incapable of chang-
“ ing.

“ Committing you therefore to the
“ care of Heaven, and beseeching our
“ great Protector, not to convert my joys
“ into a crime by leaving your heart
“ exposed to the tumult of passion, I
“ will venture to tell you—and may
“ you receive the news with fortitude !
“ —that the man you once owned you
“ preferred to all the world, and whose
“ hand you rejected only because yours
“ was then engaged, whose death you
“ have honoured with your tears, and
“ to whose memory you have vowed
“ eternal and conjugal attachment, is
“ living ! and waits only your permis-
“ sion to cross the sea to you.

“ Let me now explain to you the cir-
“ cumstances

“circumstances that misled you.— My
“mother has told me what you heard,
“and a small degree of conjecture is
“all that is wanting to make it perfect-
“ly intelligible. The man who shot
“himself at the inn near Canterbury,
“was certainly a highwayman who had
“stopped and robbed me, and by that
“means became possessed of my watch
“and pocket-book, and of what I still
“more valued, your miniature, which
“I had been at infinite pains to get done.
“—The likeness was stolen at various
“times: it was strong; and the small
“chance I then had of ever possessing the
“original, rendered it doubly precious.
“It was in going to Bellamy’s that
“I was attacked. The postboy missed
“his way, and benighted me on the
“sea-beach near Sandwich: here I was
“met by two highwaymen, who hav-
“ing stopped the chaise, demanded my
“money. As I carried fire arms, I re-

“solved not to be robbed, and pre-
“sented a pistol to the man at my left
“hand: it missed fire, and he dis-
“charged the contents of his into my
“shoulder. I could resist no longer :
“they dragged me from the carriage,
“rifled my pockets, and left me bleed-
“ing on the sand. The post-boy, ter-
“rified at his own danger, I suppose,
“whipped his horses, and left me to
“perish. I was left alone, and I
“Here I lay in undescrivable agony
“till day-break, when I felt my
“clothes grew wet, and found the tide
“was making towards me. I strove to
“move, but the loss of blood had so
“weakened me, it was impossible : I
“therefore gave myself up for gone,
“and a thought darted towards you
“immediately, reconciled me to my
“welcome fate. In about an hour, I
“imagine, I felt myself borne on the
“water ; the waves alternately fetched
“and

“and returned me several times. At
 “last I was quite clear of the land,
 “and making no exertion, floated like
 “a log.

“My senses abandoned me; and in
 “this situation, I could not long have
 “survived, had not a Spanish privateer;
 “driven nearer to our coast than she
 “designed, seen me and sent her long
 “boat to take me up. I was received
 “into the vessel; I came to my senses:
 “my wound was examined, a ball ex-
 “tracted, and I was treated with hu-
 “manity; but I was a prisoner, and as
 “such, sent to Cadiz, where I con-
 “tinued in close confinement till a
 “month ago.

“At that time hearing by the jailor’s
 “servant who commiserated my case,
 “that an Englishman of rank was ar-
 “rived on government business, I got
 “a letter

“a letter conveyed to him, and he
“procured my release and passage
“home.

“Supposing, though ignorant of the
“story you had heard, that my mother
“must have concluded me lost for ever,
“I used all proper caution in introducing
“myself to her: I wrote to my sister, but
“found she and her husband had been
“dead a short time. I then got a friend
“to see my mother, and am happy to
“say, she has not suffered by surprise,

“And now, my dear Lady Donach-
“muir, no longer my adored Miss Ha-
“milton, or my ideal *Mina Holt*, what
“may I hope? Can I flatter myself
“that you will bestow a thought on a
“connection now far beneath you?—
“Yes, I will promise myself this fel-
“city; and without presuming to sug-
“gest what you shall do to make me
“happy, I will leave all to your direc-
“tion,

"tion, only requesting you to believe"
 "that I am

"Your's unalterably,

" ———— "

What joy ever exceeded mine, when the first emotions this letter excited had abated, and I was able to read it again, and advert to its delightful consequences? I instantly resolved that, all real impediments being now removed, nothing should hinder me from forming an indissoluble union with him, to whom the most commendable qualities attached me. My friends rejoiced with me, and declared themselves ready to forward my wishes in any possible way. At first I scarce knew what I would have; but after a short rumination, I decided on an immediate return home. The Count and Countess di Viana in-

sisted on accompanying me. Don Carlos, and Donna Emilia were to go forward to Lisbon, where we promised to join them as soon as we could after my marriage.

Rest was a subject now so foreign to my thoughts, that I could not endure the idea of it. Our carriages were ordered for an early hour the next day; our baggage was got ready; and when I had seen every requisite preparation made, I threw myself on a bed to recruit my strength at least by a supine posture for my journey. For the sake of dispatch, we were to breakfast before we left Brussels; and we were within a quarter of an hour of departing, when a message was brought me from an English gentleman, a Mr. Bellamy, who desired to speak with Lady Donachmuir on private business.

Mr. Bellamy I knew to be the intimate

mate friend of Mr. Cyril; and, imagining that he might be charged with a personal communication of what my letter had told me, I gladly, and without the least hesitation, went down to him.

My countenance must, I am sure, have expressed the joy of my heart at that moment, and my welcome of Mr. Cyril's friend; but it seemed to have no effect on him. Instead of the usual salutations, or any thing like a cordial reply to my, 'O Mr. Bellamy, how happy I am to see you!' he lifted up his hands and eyes as if lost in astonishment, and gave me a look of the most disdainful anger.

Such a reception instantly corrected the hilarity of my deportment; and, a little provoked at such ill-timed and undeserved rudeness, I coldly asked his business. He answered me, as nearly as I can recollect, in these terms:—

"I scarce know, madam, what my business is;—I know what it *was*; but now that I see who it is I am sent to, I have little inclination to disclose it."

"Explain yourself, sir: I am not conscious of having given you offence."

"Offence? No;—it would be misnaming your conduct to call it *offence*:—it is of a kind that does more than simply offend;—it wounds—it stabs—it betrays—it murders."

I was almost petrified with amazement; and, hurt at being so ill thought of by a gentleman I really esteemed, and, for his friend's sake, regarded as my friend, the tears started from my eyes, and I begged to know how I had merited such language.

"Your Ladyship will forgive me," resumed Mr. Bellamy, "for the un-
" guarded

"guarded expressions I have been betrayed into. That I may distress you no farther, I will take my leave."

I intreated him to stay and satisfy me, and not cruelly to deprive me of all chance of vindicating myself.—He then more coolly asked me if I was not the Miss Hamilton he had been acquainted with at Mrs. Semhurst's. I replied with a simple affirmative.

"Then," said he, "madam, a little reflection on your conduct there, and its consequences, will plead my excuse for any rudeness I have been guilty of.—Triumphing in the power of your beauty, you deluded the friend of my bosom into a passion for you, which at the time you knew you could not lawfully return; and you forced him to an act of desperation human nature shudders at."

I now saw Mr. Bellamy's mistake, and, relieved by knowing I could set it right, and rejoice him with the news I had so lately been blessed with, I replied that I could convince him I did not deserve all his anger, and that he had been misinformed.

He was too much moved to be patient. He would not allow he could be misinformed. Alarmed at Mr. Cyril's unusually long silence, he had written for intelligence of him to Mr. Agthorpe, who I found had made just such a report of me as I would have given him credit for. He had represented the misfortune of Mr. Cyril's death as entirely the consequence of my artful conduct; and this considered, Mr. Bellamy's anger was no more than just. I suffered it to spend itself, while I collected myself to undeceive him; and then told him, that, however I had erred in judgment, my conscience acquitted me of any ill intention. "I was perhaps," said I, "betrayed
int

“into imprudence in staying at Mrs.
“Semburst’s, when I suspected her son’s
“attachment to me; but surely his friend,
“though he may blame, will forgive me,
“when I confess that my doing so was
“wholly owing to my want of resolution
“to quit him. He could not be more
“partial to me than I was to him. I was
“given to understand his affections were
“otherwise engaged; and therefore I
“trusted I might indulge in the pleasure
“of his society without danger. I have
“erred, but I hope not unpardonably,
“nor are the consequences of my error
“as fatal as you suppose them.”

“Good Heaven! madam—can there
“be consequences more fatal, than that
“such a man as my friend should have
“been driven to an act of suicide?”

“But you are deceived, Mr. Bellamy.
“—I have it in my power to torment you
“for your angry reproaches; but I am not

“in

“in a humour to give or suffer pain. The
“obstacle to my accepting Mr. Cyril is
“now removed : he is alive and in Eng-
“land, whither I am instantly returning
“to reward, as far as is in my power, his
“attachment and his sufferings. If you
“knew what I have gone through, you
“would not be so severe on me.”

Poor Bellamy reeled towards a chair, and I really thought would have fainted. Impatient as I was to be gone, some consideration was due to him : I gave him time to recover, and then put Mr. Cyril's letter into his hand. He read it attentively, and his joy was manifest, but still it was not perfect : he looked at the letter ; he looked at me ; and then saying, he had been so long out of England that he knew nothing of our affairs after his friend's quitting London, he asked me what was the obstacle I alluded to as occasioning my refusal of Mr. Cyril.

I replied

I replied, my then subsisting, though merely nominal marriage with Sir Luson Linfield, who had now been dead some time. I related the principal circumstances of his death, and concluded by expressing unreservedly my satisfaction in the prospect I was now entering on.

Mr. Bellamy bit his lips in silence, then put his hand in his pocket, and produced a letter;—said he meant to have pleaded the cause of the writer, but was then unable.—“Do not let me see you open it,” said he, as he gave it me;—“I cannot stand it;—an answer shall be sent for; for I can interfere no farther.”—He then hastily quitted the house.

I will not set you, my dear Lady Catherine, to guess what was my first supposition on this occasion.—I really imagined Mr. Bellamy had casually
seen

seen me, without recollecting me as a former intimate ; that he had heard of me only as Lady Donachmuir ; and that, being attracted either by my situation or person, he was come to propose himself to me, which, considering his own merit, his large fortune, his greater expectations, and his family, was no unpardonable presumption in him. Concluding, therefore, that his billet would not prove half so interesting to me as its contents were to him, I opened it as I went up stairs, intending, as was due to him, to leave an answer to be given to his messenger when it was called for. I cannot describe what I felt when these words met my eyes :—

“ A man whom every hour’s increas-
“ ing debility summons to his death-
“ bed, intreats the attention of Lady
“ Donachmuir to his sorrows, and his
“ penitential confession of the crimes
“ that have produced them. He asks

“ no.

“no consideration as a being of this
“world; he wishes for no consolation
“but her entire forgiveness—a comfort
“he dares not request, and can plead
“no claim to.

“You certainly did not know me
“yesterday when I met you:—you
“looked at me as if you commiserated
“the distresses of a stranger. Perhaps
“you have given credit to the report
“of my death;—if so, and if on that
“foundation you have built any hope
“of future happiness, would to God I
“had indeed died when I was supposed
“dead!

“I mean to give you no disturbance.
“—Long I cannot exist: and could I
“but obtain your pardon, I should not
“wish to remain a moment longer on
“earth but for the purpose of repent-
“ance and amendment.

The

“ The friend who brings you this,
“ and who has promised to enforce my
“ request, is a Mr. Bellamy, with whom
“ I have accidentally become acquaint-
“ ed. I have disburdened my tortured
“ mind to him ; and he will bring me
“ whatever answer you please to send
“ me.

“ When I advert to the relation that
“ has for years subsisted between us,
“ and which is not yet effectually dis-
“ solved, it wounds me to the soul to
“ think how basely I deserted you, and
“ what have been your miseries in conse-
“ quence of that desertion.—For Hea-
“ ven’s sake, dearest madam, let me die
“ in peace with you, if it is not too late
“ for me to obtain it.—Good God !
“ can I retain my senses, and reflect
“ that you are my wife ?

“ O do not, do not refuse to see me !
“ Have whoever you choose with you.

“—I can

“—I can yet crawl to you, and would
“ evince the sincerity of my contrition,
“ by dying at your feet.—Delay will be
“ death to

“Your very penitent, humble servant,
“ LUSON LINFIELD.”

I remember that I had got about half through this second epistle from the dead, when it overpowered me; and from the place where I had halted to peruse it I fell to the bottom of the stairs. What saved my limbs in the fall, who came to my assistance, or how I was restored to my senses, I cannot tell you. I know only that I found myself on my bed, and the Countess di Viana, Donna Emilia, and servants, standing round me in great consternation.

My

My memory of what had happened was perfect before my speech returned; and as I lay I ruminated on the tremendous blow that had demolished all my prospects. The Countess, to whom alone Sir Luson's letter could be intelligible, had been too much occupied to look at it; and as soon as I was tolerably recovered, and it was found I was not materially hurt, I was reminded that the carriages were still waiting, and asked if I thought I could venture to set out, or would postpone my journey till the following day. I could reply only by putting the letter into her hand: she fully comprehended my situation, and, dismissing all preparations, turned her thoughts wholly to me.

I was soon able to converse on the subject; but it was not equally easy to determine how to proceed best with a person of such doubtful integrity as Sir Luson Linfield. It was the wish of all my friends that

I should

I should pursue the plan of returning to England; but all concurred with me in the cruelty of leaving Bruffels without seeing Sir Luson; and all were forced to confess that, at least for the present, my projected marriage must be postponed.

I had about four hours for consideration. A message came from Sir Luson requesting an answer. I complied, by desiring to see Mr. Bellamy immediately.—To this Sir Luson replied by a billet—

“Bellamy has an hour ago quitted
“Bruffels—he has told me what has driven me almost mad—O Lady Donachmuir, do for God’s sake admit me
“—do not set out on your journey till
“you have sealed my pardon. — I will
“not impede your intentions—you shall
“marry the man you own you love, if
“the powers on earth can free you
“from me.—I will hide myself in any
“corner

“ corner of the world, rather than you
“ shall be disappointed—but this is
“ needless—a little patience ere you
“ unite yourself to a deserving hus-
“ band, and you shall see the most un-
“ deserving of all men quietly deposit-
“ ed in his grave.—Still let me urge,
“ O if you have any pity, let me see
“ you.”

Nature had not gifted me with a heart of adamant; and such I must have had to have refused so small a request to a dying man. I therefore wrote back:

“ I freely forgive all that has passed,
“ and am in perfect charity with Sir
“ Luson Linfield, for part of whose er-
“ rors I consider myself as responsible.
“ I am very willing to see him; and for
“ that purpose will remain at home all
“ day, or will wait on him at any pro-
“ per place he shall appoint, whither
“ the

"the Count and Countess di Viana will
"accompany me."

"A. DONACHMUIR."

As soon as possible Sir Luson came. I would not shock his feelings or degrade him, by having my friends, who were not only strangers but enemies to him, absolutely in the same room with me when he was introduced; but contented myself with their being in the next apartment, the door of which I left ajar.

At sight of the man to whom I had been married, I felt all antipathy give way. I suspended all painful wandering of memory towards him I in my heart preferred; and listened only to the plaintive voice of compassion. Pale and emaciated, even to a greater degree than the day before, he entered the room on
"his

his crutches: he dropped them as he approached, and in speechless agony threw himself on his knees before me. Had he been the vilest wretch on earth, and had I experienced still greater cruelty from him, I could not have stood a sight so truly moving as that of a fellow-creature, on whose head the hand of death lay heavy, supplicating me for forgiveness—me, who was a being of the same frail texture, and the measure of whose iniquity had perhaps been abridged only by want of power.

I assisted him to rise: I repeated my assurances of perfect forgiveness, and ratified them with my tears; but for a while I feared it was too late, and that the exertion to procure this fancied blessing had prevented the wretched man's obtaining it. I ordered what I thought might restore him; and when he was a little revived, I begged his patience for a few minutes while I influenced

ced the Countess di Viana in his favour. She joined us, with looks calculated to encourage him, and in about an hour I flattered myself I should escape the sin of being his immediate murderer, and he was able to account for his seemingly miraculous return to life.

“I landed, said he, at Harwich,
 “with the unjustifiable intention of as-
 “serting my claim on Lady Donach-
 “muir. There I was met by Lord Chef-
 “ton, who required the satisfaction of
 “a gentleman for my conduct to Lady
 “Jane Alderway—we fought without
 “seconds; and I was left on the ground
 “to all appearance dead. A farmer
 “coming by with a cart saw me, and
 “signs of life returning, he took me to
 “his house, and considering me as a
 “person who had been robbed and shot
 “at, he sent for a surgeon in the neigh-
 “bourhood who attended me with the
 VOL. III. L “utmost

“utmost assiduity, and completed the
“cure of my wound.

“The expences I incurred here,
“nearly stripped me of all the money
“I had; and I was debating on the
“means of obtaining enough to defray
“the charges of my journey, when one
“morning before I was able to go out,
“I saw the carriage of a gentleman I
“was well acquainted with drive by the
“house. I sent after it to Harwich,
“whither I concluded it was going and
“where it was found. My friend came
“to me, commiserated my situation, and
“pressed me earnestly to return with
“him to Brussels, promising to stay for
“me at Harwich till I had acquired
“strength sufficient for the under-
“taking.

“My near prospect of death, and
“the confinement and solitude I had
“been compelled to, had already produ-
“ced

ced in my mind very serious reflection on the purpose of the journey I was stopped in; and remorse succeeding to these reflections, I was easily prevailed on to relinquish my design and return into exile. Soon after I returned hither I found myself in absolute poverty, and at one time had not a guinea nor the means of raising one. To relieve myself from this distress I wrote to England, requesting my creditors to continue my yearly allowance, and to make me a speedy remittance. This letter I suppose miscarried, for I had no reply to it.

In a few days after I had written, and when I was entirely destitute of cash, I fell into this illness which is now hastening me to my grave; and hearing Mr. Bellamy an English gentleman newly arrived was come to the same house to lodge, I begged to see him: he relieved my pressing neces-

“ilities, and I in return gave him a
“recital of my distresses, their causes,
“and their salutary effect on my mind:
“he heard me with patience, and con-
“ceiving as I did, that I had not long
“to live, he dissuaded me from impor-
“tuning my creditors, from whom he
“feared some harsh refusal: he advised
“me as the most conscientious mode
“of procedure, to suffer my ill-treated
“wife to remain in the tranquillity she
“desired, and on that condition he has
“to this hour generously maintained
“me.

“Yesterday after suddenly meeting
“Lady Donachmuir, I returned home
“in a state of spirits that alarmed his
“friendship. He acquiesced in my
“wish to obtain her forgiveness; and
“finding me considerably worse after
“this accident, he offered himself to be
“the bearer of a letter and to urge my
“request.

“On

“On returning after having discharg-
“ed this friendly office, Mr. Bellamy
“astonished me by telling me he had
“been intimately acquainted with Lady
“Donachmuir in England as Miss Ha-
“milton; that a reciprocal attachment
“subsisted between her and a gentle-
“man of the name of Cyril, to whom,
“under an idea of my having fallen in
“the duel with Lord Cheston, she now
“proposed to unite herself, and was on
“the point of departing for England.

“Some hours elapsed before I could
“resolve what course to take. At one
“moment I was inclined to suffer you
“to depart, and the next made me alter
“my opinion—I was in this fluctuating
“state, steady only in my purpose of
“obtaining your pardon before my
“death, when your request to see Mr.
“Bellamy relieved me. He, shocked
“at the embassy he had undertaken,
“grieved at the discovery he had made

“and at the distress he saw you involved
“in, to avoid my importunities with-
“drew from me, and will return to
“Brussels no more.”

Sir Luson closed his brief narrative with protestations of the sincerest repentance, and assurances, that now I had granted the pardon he asked, I should be troubled no more.

But here the still small voice of conscience interposed in his behalf. How could I, with any hope of a blessing on my vows, leave him to whom I had promised to cleave in sickness or in health, dying in Flanders while I was negotiating another marriage in England which must ultimately depend on his death? for as yet, though divorced in the lower courts, I had no right to marry again.

Pity for his deplorable situation aided
me

me to resist my ardent longing to return home; but I could not immediately settle a plan for my conduct. I therefore suffered him to depart, comforted by my word that I would do nothing to distress him. I insisted on his drawing on me for his necessary expences, and promised he should hear again from me in the evening.

When the object that had given compassion the pre-eminence in my bosom was withdrawn from my eyes, I confess the sudden disappointment of all my hopes completely overwhelmed me, and I could almost have wished I had never been undeceived as to the event of Sir Luson's duel. But a little reflection set my ideas of good and evil right; and on consulting with my friends I was cheered by perceiving that I might, though not immediately, indulge my own inclinations with the approbation of my conscience. Sir Luson was in

such a state as left us no hope of recovery : I had only to perform my duty to him as a friend, and might then, without long delay, irreproachably give my hand to Mr. Cyril.

Yet tolerable as this prospect was, it was a cruel task to produce it to him, whom it must disappoint grievously.— I was not at all equal to the undertaking : I made several fruitless efforts to write, and at last accomplished a brief incoherent scrawl to Mr. Cyril, stating my situation.

All thoughts of my leaving Brussels were for the present laid aside, and all preparations countermanded. Don Carlos and Donna Emilia could not so conveniently wait, and therefore set forward on their journey. The Count and Countess di Viana would not leave me ; and as soon as we were quiet, our attention was directed towards Sir Luson.

The

The day after our interview he took to his bed, where I visited him frequently; but always accompanied by one or other of my friends. No one could be more sensible of his approaching end, nor could any one more seriously prepare for it. In the course of a week's attendance on him, his penitent conduct had so worked on me that I felt something akin to affection for him, and was truly grieved when his physician called on me one morning to say, he doubted whether he could live through the following night. Sincerely desirous of knowing whether aught yet remained unattempted that could save him, I questioned the physician as to the nature of his disease.—“Bodily disease,” he replied, “he has little. Sir Luson is dying of a worn-out mind; vexation, or what is commonly called, a broken heart, is his malady.—I understand from him, that he has no one to blame but himself;

“ self; and for that reason the case is
“ still more desperate.—Did he suffer
“ by any one else, his truly lamentable
“ condition might procure him relief;
“ but if he is his own enemy he must
“ die; for all the *materia medica* cannot
“ save him.”

The horror of guilt overpowered me when I heard this decisive opinion. I could not acquit myself as Sir Luson acquitted me.—How could I presume to say what he might not have been, had he never known me? He had, as well as myself, been most injudiciously educated, spoiled by a widowed mother, and inured to early dissipation. His wish to obtain me had prompted him to adopt such a behaviour as he thought would win on me: he had been betrayed into follies in hopes of redeeming all by marrying me: even in his courtship of me I had used him ill: my disappointed expectations were his ruin:

ruin : he was shut out from domestic comfort ; he had formed an illicit connexion, for which he had severely smarted :—distress had driven him to desperate resources, and desperation had banished whatever was good from his mind ; but still, whenever brought to his recollection, he had discovered signs of repentance, and proved his heart far from hardened.—I knew that at one time, he had no inconsiderable portion of good sense, and was thoroughly good natured. Was such a man to die without my making him every reparation in my power ? Certainly not, my conscience replied to my query—Let me, O gracious Heaven ! have the satisfaction of discharging this small portion of duty ; and, if it be Thy will, farewell Cyril for ever !

Summoning all my fortitude, to bear me through a scene so distressing as that of, perhaps, seeing a man expire whom

my conduct had murdered, I was preparing instantly to go to him, when I was stopped by the arrival of letters from England.—There was one only for me; and that was from Mr. Holmes.—I read it, hoping it would prove a cordial to my sinking spirits.—It was wholly the contrary; for it contained the most afflicting news: nothing less than the death of my dear unhappy Caroline Smith, whom a three days' fever had carried to an untimely grave.

Such was the state of my mind at that moment, that, while I mourned, I envied my Caroline's fate.—Peace to thy ashes, said I, thou art now where I would be:—the troubles of this world are buried with thee in thy grave. Ah, when shall that peace be my happy lot? My

My grief was too violent, for some hours, to admit my visiting Sir Luson without distressing him; but it had an effect on me highly favourable to his interests. It so entirely removed from my mind all idea of happiness or even comfort, that I cared not what I sacrificed to procure him peace. Our calamities brought us to a level with each other, and every wish to disengage myself from him was annihilated.

I set out for his lodgings in the evening, persuaded, and sincerely fearing, I should see him no more. Caution was now useless.—I fancied he would be gratified if I went alone, and might more fully ease his oppressed mind when he talked unwitnessed.—I went to his bedside—he knew me—took my hand and kissed it, thanking me for my unmerited attention to him, and my offers to do whatever could contribute to his satisfaction:—he seemed to revive

as

as I spoke, said he had nothing to request but a continuance of my attention for a few hours, and that I would afford him a decent interment. He mentioned Caroline Smith, to whom he did not doubt I would be kind, and expressed a wish, that he had reserved something of his estate to revert to her children. I promised that they should be properly provided for; but omitting to include the mother in this promise, he took the alarm.—I could answer his question only by tears; which betrayed what I would have concealed: he guessed the truth, and I unable any longer to support myself under such aggravated sorrow, as soon as I saw him tolerably composed, took a final farewell of him.

I passed the night without going to bed, and, having heard nothing of Sir Luson, I sent early in the morning to make enquiries. He was yet alive, and wished

wished once more to see me. I again went, and found him, as I thought, mended. A ray of hope now cheered me; I fancied him not irrecoverably gone, and I determined to make a desperate experiment to save him.

On his mentioning Caroline, I replied that it was too true we had lost her; that I was satisfied of his attachment to her, and therefore grieved that he should be disturbed at a time when quiet was his only comfort, by hearing of her death. He said, very properly, that it particularly concerned him, as he might be in some measure the cause of it; but that it was a misfortune that called for his gratitude, as it diminished his regret at leaving the world. ‘But,’ said I, ‘Sir Luson, I do not think you in the imminent danger I did yesterday. I begin to entertain hopes that, if you would aid what remains of your strength by your own exertions, you would

"would recover."—He replied, "It is
"possible; but I have no encourage-
"ment to make any exertion.—Were I
"to recover, though I flatter myself I
"should not return to the course of life
"I have led, I should be only a useless
"burden to society, and especially to you.
"—If it is God's will, I had rather die,
"and leave you to enjoy the peace and
"happiness you deserve."

I assured him, that such was the effect his situation and contrition had wrought on my mind, that I had now no wish but that of contributing to his restoration and ease; that I was thoroughly convinced of his sincerity; and that, if it pleased Heaven to spare him, and his future conduct answered my present expectations, I would, rather than make him unhappy, relinquish all other views, endeavour to get the proceedings that had separated us reversed, consent to our being re-married, and
spend

spend the remainder of my days with him.

The effect this unexpected offer produced, was such as almost made me repent my ill-timed generosity; and I was in agonies for two long hours. His physician then came, confirmed my supposition that his patient's danger was diminished, and was astonished at the sudden alteration in his pulse. He rallied me on my superior medical skill, and, imagining that Sir Luson's malady had been an unavowed or rejected passion for me, he committed him to my care, and pledged himself for his recovery.

From this hour he grew better; and from this hour did I endeavour with all my might to resist whatever could give him uneasiness. I convinced my friends and him, as was really the truth, that however my passions might have been pleased by the completion of the plan I had

had marked out, my reason never could have approved it, had I hereafter been undeceived. I had, by my former precipitate conduct, brought myself into a situation from which there was no possibility of my being comfortably extricated, and where perseverance was my highest prudence.

Immediately as I had formed this resolution in Sir Luson's favour, and found how efficacious it proved, I set about the galling task of writing to Mrs. Semhurst and Mr. Cyril, told my simple story, expressed the sensations of regard I really felt, and submitted my conduct to their opinion. These letters I thought it fit Sir Luson should see. They pleased him as proofs of my sincerity, while they wounded him by shewing what difficulties my wish to save him subjected me to.

I had now as ardent a lover in my
husband

husband as in Mr. Cyril ; and his powerless assiduities were all bestowed on me. I could not yet give his passion any very dignified name. I was willing to impute much to gratitude ; but the advantage was so evidently in his favour, that great praise was hardly due to it. As he had proved himself formerly not entirely impeccable, I prepared myself for some relaxation of conduct when he should be quite secure of me ; and foresaw the probability, that I must be disappointed if I relied on him for domestic comfort. But I should do him injustice if I did not own no alteration was perceptible during the whole time of his recovery. We lived as intimate friends, though in separate houses ; and the Count and Countess di Viana generously shewed him every species of regard that could encourage him to become respectable.

He speedily regained a considerable
portion

portion of strength, and a little cheerfulness, and convinced us that his foibles had eclipsed talents sufficient to render him a very rational and agreeable companion. We began to talk of our future destiny, and of arranging matters to bring us together again. I wondered that I had no reply either from Mrs. Semhurst or her son, as I had told them, my return to England, or my stay out of it, depended entirely on the temper they manifested; and I found myself really at a loss how to act.

My suspense did not last many days; but it was relieved in a manner equally unexpected and distressing. Mr. Cyril, not choosing to trust even my own representation of facts, came to Brussels, and, on his arrival at an hotel, sent me a note requesting permission to see me. He assured me, that if I ratified by word of mouth what I had written, he would leave me in peace; but till I did so,

so, he should not cease importuning me for an interview, as nothing less than the satisfaction he asked would convince him I acted spontaneously.

At the receipt of this billet I was considerably agitated, and all my hushed passions were roused by the idea, that he who, to my sorrow, I felt was yet master of them, was so near me; but I had no wish to see him: on the contrary, I was ashamed of the cruelty I had been forced to, and was desirous of shunning him.—Sir Luson was at the time with me. Consistently with my late mode of conduct, I could not secrete from him this application. I shewed him Mr. Cyril's note, and was surprised at his affecting to resent it as insolent.

The Count di Viana joined me in endeavouring to convince him of his mistake. We all, except Sir Luson, thought

thought that, after the treatment Mr. Cyril was forced to submit to, he had a right to every indulgence; and, on that ground, I would have complied with his request. Sir Lufon seemed averse to this condescension, as he termed it; but not unwilling to soften the refusal. I accordingly wrote in answer:

“ If Mr. Cyril allows Lady Donach-
“ muir a place in his friendship, he
“ will not urge a request highly distress-
“ ing to her. She wishes him to be
“ convinced she acts spontaneously;
“ and should this not satisfy him, she
“ refers him to the Count di Viana.”

I heard no more of this vexatious business, or Mr. Cyril; and again we proceeded in our matrimonial arrangements. It was agreed that Sir Lufon, who was now entirely recovered, should depart immediately for England, and
put

put matters in train ; to enable him to do which, I furnished him with bills to the amount of five hundred pounds. I was to remain a short time with the Count and Countess at Bruffels, and then, wishing equally to avoid Mrs. Semhurst's and Mr. Holmes's family, I meant to meet Sir Luson in London. Our scheme was to obtain an immediate repeal of our partial divorce, or such an authority as should set it aside. We were then to be anew married, and to sail immediately with our kind friends for Lisbon.

Sir Luson took his leave of us for the first of these purposes ; and I improved the opportunity of his absence by indulging in my well-grounded sorrow. Hard as I strove, I could not yet love him : as his spirits returned, he grew more volatile and thoughtless than became his situation ; and his humility decreased with his adversity. But still my
resolution

resolution kept up; I cared not what he was, nor how wretched he made me, provided I could but earn peace.

In about a week after he had, as we thought, failed, intelligence was brought in that he had been seen in public still at Brussels.—I sent to his lodgings; convinced the report must be false;—he was denied, and I was satisfied; but the Count was not. He went himself, and by dint of address penetrated into the house, where he found my respectable husband after dinner indulging à l'Anglois over two bottles of wine by himself. Confusion brought out the truth;—he confessed that *by a run of ill luck* he had lost the sum of money I had provided him with;—he was extremely sorry; but hoped the ensuing evening might be more propitious, and replace his loss, as he had had some material hints given him by a friend, which would

would guard him against the artifice by which he had before been cheated.

Good Heaven, thought I when the Count related the event of his search, what a prospect is mine!—what hold can I have over the mind of a man so weak in all efforts towards virtue, so strong in his propensities to vice?—But reflection is vain, and complaint is vain: we are two beings born to plague each other; and it is fit we should be united.

Fearing the consequences of his again tempting Fortune, as he proposed, the ensuing evening, I returned with the Count di Viana to him, intending to dissuade him from his rash purpose, and, if possible to prevail on him to embark immediately. I was too impetuous to wait the forms of introduction when arrived at his lodgings. I knew where the Count had left him, and there I sought him. As we approached

the door of his apartment, I heard voices, and some kind of bustle, and on opening the door, I saw Sir Luson shutting that into an inner room in great seeming haste. He shut it too quick; for he left exposed to my observation the bottom of a lady's petticoat.

Provoked, as I had reason to be, at the story this misfortune told, I could scarcely keep my gravity. Nothing could exceed the expression of Sir Luson's countenance. Hurried, frightened, and vexed, yet forced to seem at ease, casting one moment a look at the unfortunate door, and the next fixing his eyes on me to prevent my looking that way, endeavouring to get between me and the petticoat, fearful of moving, and yet too much distressed to stand still, he was completely embarrassed, and superlatively ridiculous. I cannot compliment myself so far as to say I felt the least wish to relieve him. I
desired

desired him first to release the fair captive: he did so without my seeing her; and I then, waving all reproaches, insisted on his immediately leaving Brussels, if he hoped for any farther regard from me.

He was again humble and penitent; and, professing himself ready to embark in the next morning's packet, and promising to trust no more to the genius of a gaming table, I furnished him with an order for such a sum of money as I thought indispensibly necessary, to be paid him in London, gave him what was requisite for his expences thither, agreed to meet him at an appointed time at one of the Adelphi hotels, and left him.

On enquiry the following day, I found he had adhered to his word, and had left for me a long letter expressing his

sense of my conduct, and offering every recompence that a thorough reformation of old habits could amount to. I staid only one week longer at Brussels; and then with the Count and Countess set off for my native city.

My first query on getting out of the chaise was, for Sir Luson Linfield. No such person had been heard of.—What was I to conclude? I began to doubt the possibility of serving a man so avowedly his own enemy.

Our perplexities and doubts had no relief till the next day at noon, when I was enquired for by a servant out of livery. When introduced, he gave me a bit of paper, to which he desired an answer: it contained these few words scarcely legibly written:

“ If

"If you are arrived, for Heaven's
" sake, come and see the last of

" Your dying

" LUSON LINFIELD."

From the bearer of this I could learn little more than that he had been hired a few days before by Sir Luson Linfield, who was then in lodgings in Pall-mall, and dangerously ill.

The Count was from home at this juncture. I thought it cruel to wait for him; and therefore ordering a hackney coach to be called, I prepared to obey the summons. The Countess accompanied me; and I had the precaution to take George Tims, to whom I gave strict orders, on no consideration to leave the house we were going to while I was in it.

On arriving at the place, we were shewn to a very elegant front room : soon after I was desired to go up to Sir Luson's chamber. I would not go alone, but contrived to place my friend out of the sick man's sight. He was in bed, and apparently very ill. I enquired his disease. He made me sit down, and then told me he was dying by the hand of a perfidious woman.

I began to imagine something had incensed him against me, and that I was the person he meant ; but he soon undeceived me : he confessed his disappointment in obtaining the good he had lately thought almost his own in possession, and the severe punishment he now endured were perfectly just : his death, he said, was entirely the consequence of his own conduct and his vices ; and it was beyond doubt the work of the woman I had so nearly surpris'd with him in his apartments at Brussels. She, he informed

informed me, was a dancer in the Opera at Paris : there he had become acquainted with her : she had followed him to Bruffels, had lived in every species of infamy, and finding him relieved from the poverty, on account of which she had often deserted him, she had attached herself to him again soon after his recovery : that having stated to her his situation, and the necessity he was under of quitting her for ever, he hoped the connexion at an end ; but that she pursued him to England, and he owned again entrapped him : that at length seeing it impossible to shake her off any other way, he had left her on the road to London : that a few days before, she had again found him out, and as if convinced of the fruitlessness of her pursuit, she had agreed to leave him in peace, on condition of his treating her with a reconciliation supper : to this he had consented ; and had every reason to believe she had infused poison

into the wine he drank. She had immediately absconded : he in a few hours felt himself grow ill, and continued in excruciating pain till a few hours before, and was now dying.

Hoping it was not too late to save him, I sent for a physician of eminence in the neighbourhood, who at first sight of him confirmed his opinion of his own imminent danger, and the inutility of all medicine. The fatal symptoms increased every minute, and in less than an hour he lost all power of speech and recollection. I could stand it no longer : I could be of no farther use to him ; and therefore leaving George Tims to assist in taking care of him, with direction to inform me of any change, I returned with my companion to our hotel.

Absence from a scene of distress may be relief to some minds ; but to mine
it

it was an increase of suffering. Every direful image was before me, rendered still more torturing by ignorance and suspense. I would not have you suppose I wished the life of a man who lived but to my torment and his own ruin ; but I sincerely prayed for his well-being, in whatever state the Almighty thought fit to place him ; and this perhaps, as much for the ease of my own conscience as for his sake.

In the evening George Tims returned to us, with the final intelligence we expected. He had seen Sir Luson expire ; and was himself affected by the scene, in a manner that bore the fullest testimony of the excellence of his own nature. I was shocked : I was sincerely grieved for the fate of this unfortunate victim of vice ; but ingenuously I must own, I felt a heavy oppression removed from my heart ; and my thoughts in-

stantly flew to him, who was, in my idea, its natural possessor.

My affectionate friends urged whatever could raise my estimation of the release I was blessed with, and diminish the concern I could not but feel on so truly melancholy an occasion; and the next morning, when I had given every necessary direction for the care of Sir Lusson's body, and his proper funeral, they endeavoured to prevail on me immediately to write an account of what had happened to Mr. Cyril; but though it was a measure I was bound in justice to resolve on, my sorrow was yet too fresh to admit of so much self-concern; and I meant to postpone it for a few days.

The Countess di Viana acquiesced in what I said, yet too sanguine in her wishes, and too earnest for my happiness to bear any delay patiently, she, without

without my privity, herself wrote to Mr. Cyril, and when she had done so, producing her letter ready to be sent off, and shewing me only the superscription, she begged my permission to dispatch it. I could not refuse. George Tiins was called up, ordered to provide himself with a horse, and to set off without delay for Mrs. Semhurst's house in the country.

"I will go certainly," replied honest George; "but I think it will be of no use; for if I am not mistaken, Mr. Cyril is now here in the house: it is the same gentleman that came to Brussels for a little while: he has the same valet with him he had then: I know the man very well."

George's commission was at an end: he was dismissed; and as soon as my fluttering heart was a little at rest, we consulted how we should bring about an

interview with Mr. Cyril, with due regard to decorum. It was not certain that his sentiments of me were what they had been : he had certainly been very ill-treated, though it was out of my power to prevent it. Frequent disappointments, I well knew, would render postponed gratification insipid ; and well as I loved him, I did not care to risque offering myself to him before I had reason to believe I should be gladly accepted.

After due deliberation we determined to send him an invitation in the names of the Count and Countess and myself, to spend the evening with us ; and it was agreed, that till we discovered somewhat of his present disposition, Sir Luson's death should not be mentioned.—To our card he returned the following answer, addressed only to me :

even I have

“ My

“ My dearest Madam,
“ Your peculiar embarrassments, notwithstanding all your kindness, have nearly broken my heart : they have effectually subdued my spirit, though my love for you is unabated ; and they have driven me to an act of desperation, I cannot justify on any other ground than my wish, since I can never be happy myself, at least to make others so.

“ What this is, it is better you should at present not know : the event is yet contingent : to-morrow’s post will decide my fate. Till it arrives, I must decline seeing you : should it bring me the news I pray for, I shall instantly fly to you ; should it bring what I fear, I shall leave London immediately, but not without writing to you and explaining my situation.

“ I have

“ I have heard the catastrophe of his
“ unfortunate life to whom you have
“ shewn yourself an angel. What
“ might I not have hoped now, had I
“ not been too yielding and too precipi-
“ tate ! I am mad at my own folly,
“ but it is, I fear, irretrievable.

“ With due acknowledgments to the
“ Count and Countess di Viana for the
“ regard they honour me with, and
“ with every sentiment of respect, es-
“ teem, and love for yourself, O ! might
“ I but subscribe myself *virtually*, as I
“ do *sincerely*

“ Wholly your's,

“ HENRY CYRIL.”

Judge, my dear Lady Catherine,
what was my torture till the morrow's
post arrived, and what were my agonies
when I received, instead of the visit I
had

had in spite of opposing circumstances hoped for, this annihilating stroke to all my comfort.

“I said you should know the distresses of my situation before I left London.—Nothing but my promise, can support my pretensions to integrity under that and a still more cruel trial that awaits me.

“Urged by my mother and many of my relations to marry, when the impossibility of obtaining you was too evident to be contradicted, and aware that unless I complied with their wishes the large property I inherit from the toil of my ancestors must descend to a person eminently unworthy, I, for peace sake, listened to their admonitions, and having warned them of what no one of them will believe, that however a sense of duty might controul or stimulate me, I
“ could

" could not make any woman on earth
 " an affectionate husband, I promised to
 " look out among my acquaintance for
 " such a one as I might live on *civil*
 " terms with. Think my adored Lady
 " Donachmuir (O that I might rather
 " say my adored Miss Hamilton!) how
 " low I, who have felt all the genial
 " influence of love, must be degraded
 " in the class of sensitive beings, when
 " I could seek with the vulgar herd for
 " a wife who might continue my family,
 " and with whom I should live on *civil*
 " terms!

" Just at this juncture, and I suppose
 " by the contrivance of my well-mean-
 " ing but persecuting relations, my un-
 " cle wrote to me, offering me his
 " beautiful, accomplished, and amiable
 " daughter.—She you know has a very
 " small fortune: I am convinced she is
 | " deserving of the whole of mine. I
 " took but a short time to consider of
 " the

“the proposition: she seemed to me a
“woman I could live as easily with as
“with any one. I thought she was of
“a temper that would suffer me to in-
“dulge my now habitual melancholy,
“and I accordingly accepted the pro-
“position, on condition it was found
“when mentioned to my cousin, per-
“fectly agreeable to her.

“She has taken a week to consider
“of it, and this day’s post brings me the
“fatal consent I expected. Driven as
“I am, I would without hesitation tell
“my uncle how I am distressed, but I
“fear the consequences to his aged and
“infirm constitution. He is, beyond
“all bounds, transported with the idea
“of disposing so advantageously of his
“only and his valuable child. I cannot
“get resolution to afflict him as my re-
“tracting must do: beside in his letter
“he tells me my proposal has produced
“on his daughter an effect that con-
“vinces

“vinces him I have been the innocent
“cause of a dejection of spirits she has
“for some months laboured under, and
“which her friends were apprehensive
“might have serious consequences.
“What is to be done in such a strait?—
“Can I break the old man’s heart?—
“Can I suffer the daughter to relapse
“into a state that may speedily terminate
“with her life? O good Heaven!
“what perplexity can equal mine?

“I am now going to set off for my
“uncle’s. My fate is peculiarly hard;
“for I not only am not allowed to marry
“the only woman I ever did or ever
“can love; but I am forced to unite
“myself where I shall to my death remain
“indifferent.

“And now, my dear Lady Donach-
“muir, before I quit you for ever, let
“me employ perhaps the last opportunity
“I shall ever improve to address
“you,

“ you, in thanking you for all the pains,
“ the equally unmerited and unavailing
“ pains, you have taken to render hap-
“ py one, whose destiny is misery.—
“ Let me intreat you not to suffer the
“ misfortune of our separation to prey
“ upon your spirits or affect your health.
“ Listen to the advice of your friends :
“ chuse some one to bestow your hand
“ on, whom Fortune does not delight in
“ persecuting. Continue your attach-
“ ment to my mother ; and if you can-
“ not think of me without a pang, en-
“ deavour to forget that there exists
“ such a person as

“ Your most affectionate,

“ And most wretched,

“ HENRY CYRIL.”

Almost worn out with various anxieties and mortifications, I looked on this disappointment as the consummation of my misfortunes, and I bore it with no
more

more fortitude than if I had all my life been nursed in the lap of Prosperity. In a few days finding my health rapidly giving way, I begged my faithful friends to accompany me to my own home in Devonshire; where the meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Holmes seemed to complete whatever was wanting to sever my rending heart. With all the expedition requisite in so precarious or rather so decided a state as mine, I settled my worldly affairs, and endeavoured to fit myself for the awful change I awaited. Out of regard to those who wished me to live, I omitted no means of recovery; but secretly rejoiced, when I perceived the powers of medicine entirely failed.

Before my mental abilities entirely forsook me, I employed them in writing to Mrs. Semhurst and Mr. Cyril, and gave directions that those letters should be carried to them immediately.—

The painful exertion nearly exhausted the
existence

the little that remained of my strength. I had been dissuaded from it by my physician; and after it, he comforted me by an assurance that I had now rendered it impossible to save me.

In the afternoon of this day, when I had been above a fortnight deluded of the release I hourly expected, Mr. Holmes undertook the task he was so well fitted for, of warning me I must not expect to see another sun-rise. I blessed the intelligence, hailed myself now at last a happy being; and having obtained his promise, that my tranquillity should not be disturbed by taking a last melancholy adieu of those I thought far less favoured than myself, and that he would not leave me till the last glimmering spark of animation was finally extinguished, I recommended myself again to Heaven, and locked my hand fast in his, in hopes a few minutes only were wanting to complete my term of existence

existence. How miserable did I feel when I awoke from a slumber I had courted as the sleep of death, and heard the heavy-sounding clock strike twelve, and shortly after a violent ringing at the porter's gate !

I was roused by the noise ; but too far advanced into the shades of oblivion to be frightened, I was only vexed at what seemed to re-call me again to earth. A gentle knocking at my chamber door followed. I begged for quiet, and Mr. Holmes rose to see why I was disturbed—he was gone some minutes ; I heard whispering and low voices I was not accustomed to. 'Tis too cruel, thought I, thus to torture the dying.

Mr. Holmes returned to me, resumed his station by me, and all was again quiet. The physician, who now never left the house, came to visit me, and the Countess di Viana with him. They talked

talked as if my danger was over : some medicine I could not distinguish was coaxed down my throat : I was bid to live, and Mr. Holmes added his exhortation to me, to rely confidently on the Divine Goodness, for I and all my friends might yet be happy.

Such was my regard for my reverend comforter, that, in spite of what I thought impossibility, I listened to him, and exerted myself to ask how I was to avoid being miserable. With the utmost caution, and with dreadful tedious pauses intervening, I was, at day-break, told the bustle at midnight was occasioned by the sudden arrival of Mrs. Semburst, who ardently longed to see me once more. She was then gone to take some rest ; and when she awoke I could admit her without great perturbation.

She said little, and appeared much more

more affected at my emaciated limbs and death-like countenance, than I was at the prospect of quitting the world. I spoke of her son; and she then talked more freely, and asked me if I thought I could bear a visit from him.—I shook my head, and answered by a query, whether he was yet married.

No, nor ever will be, unless you are my wife, answered some one, opening the curtains at my bed's foot. I looked, and saw it was indeed Mr. Cyril himself; but I saw him only for a moment: my senses fled; and when I recovered, no one being near me but the friends and attendants whose assiduities I was accustomed to, I regarded all that had just past as a dream, and thought it hard to be now disturbed with such harassing visions.

But Mr. Holmes, whose words I ever found carried conviction and consolation

tion with them, soon proved to me the reality of what I had seen. Mrs. Semhurst and Mr. Cyril again appeared. I gave a hand to each of them, for speech I had none; and my features were now past all power of expressing the still lively sensations of my heart.

The care of my friends, and the medical skill I was aided by, in a few hours enabled me to ask Mr. Cyril where his wife was. — If you have brought her hither, said I, do not conceal it : let me see her : let me tell her what I resign to her.

“ I have no wife but you,” he answered : “ Louisa accepted my addresses only to veil a clandestine attachment she had formed with a gentleman in her father’s neighbourhood. After deluding me in the most cruel way till her scheme of elopement was complete, she set off ac-

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“ accompanied by him for Scotland, not
“ three hours before that named for our
“ marriage. I, as soon as I had a little
“ assuaged her poor father’s grief, I
“ quitted the country, called at my mo-
“ ther’s, and hearing where you were
“ and how ill you were, set forward
“ for this place.”

My prayers to Heaven were now re-
versed. Death had been in mercy de-
nied me; and after hearing that there
was something yet to live for, I begged
for life, and fancied I felt additional
strength already. I eagerly swallowed
whatever was offered me as a restora-
tive; and had not better judgment than
my own regulated me, I had inevitably
killed myself by my zeal for recovery.

For three days, however, my fate
hung most dubiously suspended; and
during that time my faithful Cyril, he
who had proved himself deserving of so
much

much more than I had to bestow, scarcely left my bedside, or looked on another object. His presence I believe was the means of saving my life; for when I turned my eyes to him, and read in his countenance what passed in his mind, I felt stimulated to labour still more sedulously for prolonged existence.

At the end of a week I was pronounced out of danger; and when six weeks were expired, I was, after all my difficulties and toils, supremely rewarded by seeing myself the wife of one who had so honestly courted, and so nobly won me. A voyage to Lisbon, which crowned my joys, restored me to perfect health and strength. Of the subsequent events I need not inform you. You know how highly I was gratified last year, by an extention of my titles and honours to him I wish to share whatever I possess. You know, my dear Lady Catherine, the felicity I have

have uninterruptedly experienced since I gave up peace as gone for ever ; and you are as sensible as myself, that but for the discipline of adversity, no human being can fitly enjoy prosperity.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

FINIS.

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